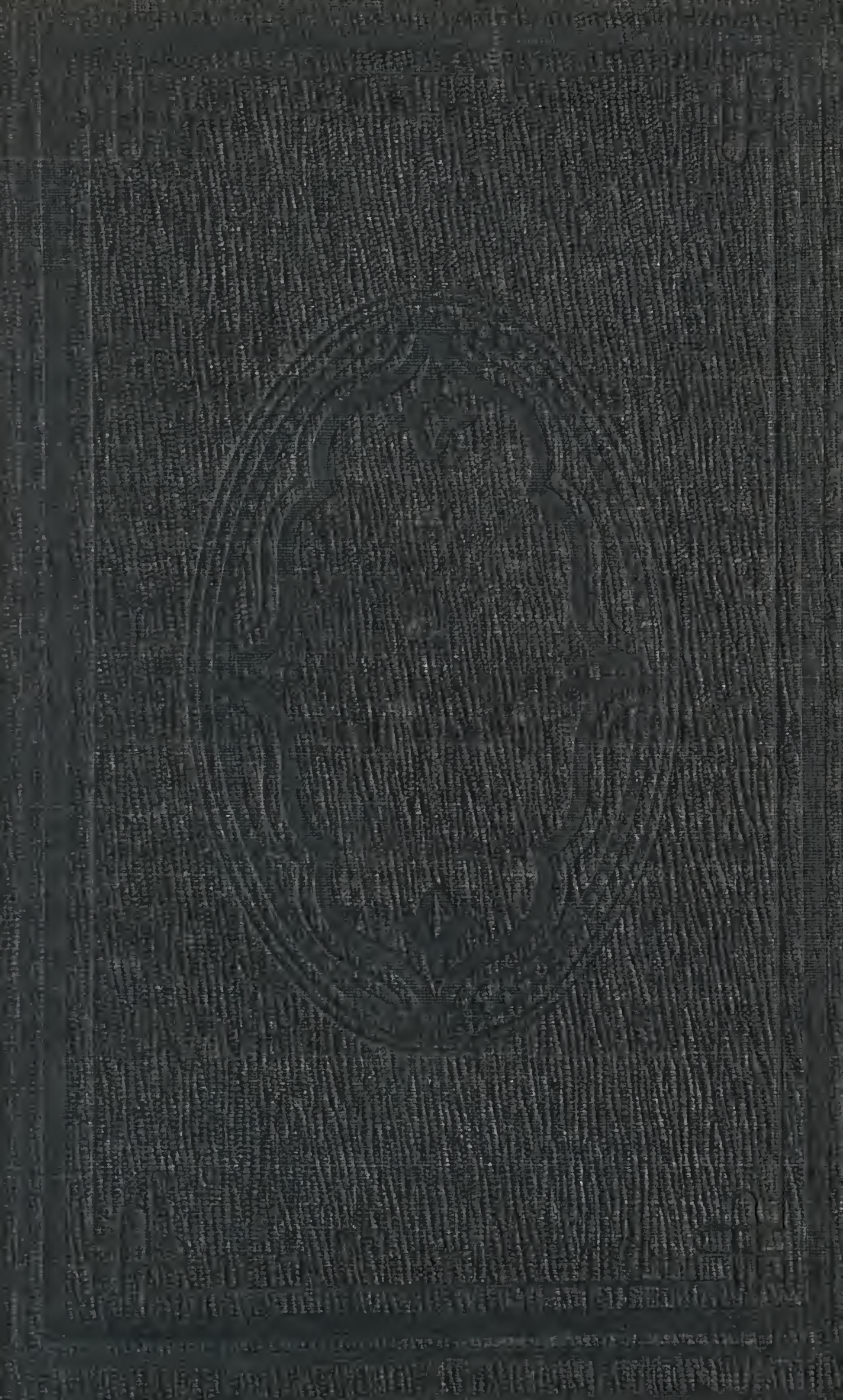

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THE

CENTRAL IDEA

OF

CHRISTIANITY.

BY

JESSE T. PECK, D. D.

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PREFACE.

A VOLUME of the author's published and unpublished writings on the Central Idea of Christianity has been frequently and urgently called for; and, after mature consideration, he does not feel at liberty longer to withhold it.

He has written, and ventured to approach the public through various periodicals, upon different branches of this subject, at intervals, during the last eight or ten years. His discussions and appeals have been designed to meet some pressing emergency, to aid in correcting some serious evil, and, so far as practicable, contribute to the healthy spiritual growth of the Church.

He was, at length, quite surprised to find that, in this irregular way, he was really writing a book. Some of his friends noticed this, and urged him to give it permanent form; intimating, indeed, in the event of his refusal, an idea of doing it for him. He thought it much better to be his own editor, especially as important portions of the discussion were in the form of unpublished manuscript; and other connecting links, absolutely indispensable, must be prepared with caution, and special adaptation to a general plan.

The work needs no further introduction, excepting to remind the reader that, in a book written in this manner, the same

idea will inevitably recur, in different special themes, and the consistency and unity of the whole will be, hence, less perfect. But, in such a discussion as we here venture to present, we regard this as an advantage rather than a blemish. While the work includes a finished system, each section is complete in itself; and, if the reader has not time to examine the volume consecutively, he will find any part of it intelligible alone. Any repetitions, not conveniently avoidable in this method of writing, will only have the effect to place some important practical thought in various aspects and relations, and thus increase the probability of permanent and useful impressions.

This effort to present to the Church a thoroughly scriptural and practical view of the Central Idea of Christianity, is humbly and prayerfully committed to God for his providential care and blessing, and to Christians of all denominations, for their candid examination, in view of the judgment of the great day. May it, then, appear that some valuable purpose has been promoted by the humble labors of

THE AUTHOR.

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THE

CENTRAL IDEA OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CENTRAL IDEA ASCERTAINED.

SEC. I. THE SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT.

THE interpretation of a system depends upon its central idea. This is seen in mechanism. The different parts of a watch, for instance, would be perfectly unintelligible to the most careful observer, without the idea which produced it. To mark the division of time being the problem, every wheel becomes a part of the solution. In the same way, government without the idea of social rights, is a collection of unmeaning forms; but, with this idea, all its details are luminous and significant. No man can understand the system of Mohammed, until he examines it as a scheme for sensual gratification. He will then see the reason for every thing that is peculiar to it. So the religious sentiment under the control of hope or fear explains the stupendous system of human folly called heathenism. Judaism exists to support the idea of national preëminence, and Catholicism has been

known for ages only by its magnificent designs of political power and universal domination. These are only illustrations of the general law that every system has its central idea; and though we may generalize sufficiently from an examination of particulars, to ascertain that idea, yet no system can be thoroughly understood, nor justly interpreted, but in the light of it.

We purpose, therefore, to discuss the question, What is the central idea of Christianity?

We do not propose to examine the various answers which have been given to this question. They are to be found not so much in books as in systems; for the different organizations under the Christian scheme have all received their distinctive forms from the notions of men with regard to the great end contemplated—the final cause of the enterprise. The Christian institutes have not produced the central idea, but the idea has produced them. There can be but one central idea of the Christian scheme, and that is, as it exists in the mind of God. Any human conception of it can only approximate the truth in proportion as it resembles the idea which existed in the mind of God when he constructed the system in its divine and essential forms. In exact proportion as the various branches of the Christian church and the heretical sects have departed from this original, have been their errors in doctrine, in ceremonies, in morals, and in government. We shall attempt to reach and expose these various errors only so far as the development and brief application of what we believe to be the true idea, may serve this purpose.

And first, we shall consult the Scriptures. The doctrines, institutions, and obligations included in

Christianity, are discussed, separately and combined, in the Holy Bible, in a great variety of forms. But he must read very superficially who can regard them as detached and independent truths. The more profoundly we study the sacred volume, the more clearly we shall see that it embodies and illustrates a splendid scheme of remedial government. Not a thought, not a fact, not a truth, bears a foreign stamp, or indicates in the slightest degree that it exists for itself alone, or for any other system whatever. The great idea which originated the several parts of this amazing scheme, is to be ascertained, not by accidental reading or limited study of the Bible, but by the strictest attention to its drift. Principles, in the abstract and in the concrete, must be collated with the utmost care. The minutest particulars, as well as the most prominent and extensive, must be viewed in their relations to each other, and the grand scope of the whole divine teaching ascertained. Whoever does this, will, we think, find the following truths, tending to a solution of our problem, clearly established:

1. The choice of God for the moral condition of the human race was perfect purity; hence he created man in his own image.

2. As this was once the choice of God, it must be eternally so, and the divine preference or will can never be met but by perfect moral purity.

3. Sin interfered with this choice, to the full extent of its existence and reign, and hence called out the severest divine displeasure.

4. There has, therefore, never been and never can be the slightest toleration of sin in any divine communica-

tions; it is condemned with unsparing severity in its most secret and plausible forms.

5. As man, by becoming a sinner, has incurred the divine displeasure, he can be saved from calamity and made perfectly happy only by entire deliverance from sin.

6. Remedial measures, originating in God, must aim directly at the destruction of sin. Excepting it in any of its forms, making provision for its continuance, its justification, or excuse, in the soul of the saved, to any extent, would be trifling, impossible in him.

7. The sacrificial offering of Christ, and the means and appliances of the gospel, reveal the plan of salvation by the destruction of sin and the restoration of man to the image of God, and can, in no way, be reconciled with the idea of salvation in sin.

We have not room to amplify these propositions, or to introduce the Scriptures which prove them. Nor is it necessary, as they will not be questioned by any whom we can hope to reach. But if they truly indicate the drift of revelation, they show, incontestably, that the great idea of Christianity is holiness; that this vast scheme of suffering, teaching, labor, and agency, has all been produced and is carried on solely to deliver man from his sins, for the ultimate perfection of Christian character. There are certain Scriptures which show conclusively that we have not mistaken the teachings of revelation upon this great question.

St. Paul to the Colossians has this remarkable saying in regard to Christ: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; where-

unto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." Then to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," is the grand and sole design of apostolic preaching. Christ, as our Mediator, appears among men to answer to that idea. He throws himself into the greatest of the apostles to energize his soul, his eloquence, and his labors, for that purpose alone. Can there be a stronger declaration that the perfection of Christian character is the central idea of the gospel? if so, we have it in this: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Holiness, then, or the "perfecting of the saints," produced the pastorate in all its forms. This alone, therefore, can explain its sacred functions; and in every endowment and authorized effort, it points to the splendid idea which called it into existence.

We give one quotation more, which covers the whole ground of revelation. Paul says to Timothy: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Here, then, are "the Holy Scriptures" "given by inspiration of God," with their vast details of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction, for the sole purpose of producing experimental and practical perfection;

and in this life, as it is thus that "the man of God" is to "be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." There is, then, no resisting it. This great idea produced the Bible—the whole Bible—and it is this alone that renders every part of it luminous. If this is the thing to be done, to make "the man of God perfect," it is just the Bible we need; and it is most appropriately entitled, by universal consent, "The Holy Bible." It is therefore settled, by authority, that holiness or Christian perfection is the central idea of Christianity.

SEC. II. THE ANALYTICAL ARGUMENT.

It is not so much to strengthen our position, as to rouse attention and induce action, that we now propose to subject the system to a critical and searching analysis, to see if we are thus conducted to the same result. Let us take our position outside of the system, and travel inward, taking up and carefully examining every part of it as we proceed, until we reach the centre, and ascertain what is that one condition and life upon which all the rest depends. And the first thing we find is, perhaps, a building—numerous buildings, indeed, of various sizes, architecture, and expense. But a building can be the central idea of nothing; for we instinctively ask, What is it for? In this instance, we observe, that the convenience of assembly is the object. The gathering next attracts our attention; but a meeting is no central idea, for we wish to know why the people meet. We soon perceive the observance of certain rites which, considered alone, seem idle, and

might be as well performed with far less pains. But we are told that this sacrament is an oath, that it implies a covenant between these men and the invisible God, and that this bread and wine are used to symbolize the body and blood of a victim for sinners. The Lord's Supper then is no central idea. And the application of water by one man, to the person of another, can be of no importance in itself; but solemnly performed "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," it carries us out of itself to the wondrous work of which it is "the sign and seal." Baptism, then, is not the central idea of the system. But upon further observation we perceive that an organization exists, that there is a vast and extended brotherhood, with all the powers and functions of a distinct and vigorous life; and we may ask, Is not this the consummation of the scheme? Certainly not; for an idea must produce an organization, and hence must be anterior to it and essentially independent of it. It may pervade the organization, but only as the soul the body, without losing its identity. The church, then, is not central in this system. Examining still more closely the acts of this society, we perceive that stated public addresses are delivered; but these, like all speeches or harangues, are to get something done. Preaching is, therefore, not the idea which produced Christianity. Solemn invocation addressed to an invisible Being is another stated exercise; but this expresses an emotion or thought, or implores some good or the aversion of some ill, out of itself. It was not, then, for the production of prayer that this system was instituted; and the same is true of praise.

Travelling inward, the light increases, indicating nearer approach to the sun at the centre. An unseen power has revealed to the soul the fact of its guilt, and it writhes in agony. But is this an object? Is the sufferer to be left in this condition? Surely not. Conviction, then, is not central to this system. This state is followed by an inward loathing of sin — a voluntary and decisive turning away from it. But repentance cannot exist alone. It can only be conceived of as a consequence or a means. Faith grasps a Redeemer, and hence, great as it is, is only an instrumentality — a condition of blessings out of itself. It was not, then, merely that men might believe, that this dispensation was given. Pardon only absolves for the past. Of itself, it effects no radical change in the moral condition or tendencies of the sinner. Left at this point, he must the next instant commence a fresh accumulation of guilt. Justification is not, therefore, the central idea of Christianity. Bring the dead soul to life, let it be "begotten of God" — "born again" — "born from above," and does this alone meet the divine purpose in commencing the work of grace? Is regeneration the grand ultimate point to which the whole gospel scheme tends? Does this properly imply that specific moral state which, of itself, fits the soul for heaven? We grant that the word may be used in a sense which would comprehend it; but is this its proper use? We think not, and for the following reasons: —

1. There is a broad and necessary distinction between the existence of a thing and the state of the thing existing, between the fact of life and the mode of life, between a soul spiritually alive and the moral condition

of the living spirit. Just as natural life and the condition of the living being are distinct, spiritual life and the moral condition of the spiritually alive are distinct. Certain invariable coincidences between these two things, in no respect interfere with their essential difference. Now, two things so entirely distinct, as the fact of spiritual life and the moral state of the spiritually alive, ought to have different names.

2. Regeneration appropriately designates the former, sanctification the latter. The first term includes both the sign and the thing signified. Generation denotes the production of natural life, *re*-generation the production of spiritual life. Now the force of the illustration is seen in the following particulars:—(1.) The soul in its natural state is "dead"—"dead in trespasses and in sins." It is so, because "to be carnally minded is death." (2.) Natural life is the product of divine power alone, and spiritual life must be also. Generation expresses the operation of this power in the one instance, and *re*-generation in the other. A similar relation exists between the ideas represented by the words creature and "new creature," born and "born again." (3.) Generation and birth produce new natural powers and functions, which demonstrate the omnipotence of their Creator; *re*-generation and the new birth produce spiritual powers and functions entirely new, which demonstrate equally the divinity of their origin. (4.) The result of generation is natural life with its accidents, the result of *re*-generation is spiritual life with *its* accidents; the degree of health may be mentioned as an accident of the former, the degree of sanctification or holiness as an accident of

the latter. The word sanctification just as appropriately denotes certain treatment of the soul, which God has brought to life, as regeneration does the fact of bringing it to life. Sanctify is from *sanctus*, holy, and *facio*, to make. Sanctification is literally the act of making holy, and this is its essential meaning in systematic divinity.

Now here are two things totally distinct from each other, as much so as a fact and a quality of a fact, a thing and an accident of a thing can be; and here are two terms, of entirely different import, completely adapted to represent these two things respectively — regeneration, the production of spiritual life; sanctification, the treatment of the soul spiritually alive — neither of which can, without violence to the laws of language, perform the office of the other. We humbly submit, therefore, that they ought not to be used interchangeably, and that attempts so to use them have caused nearly all the confusion which has embarrassed these great points in theology.

3. The experience of Christians amply sustains the distinctions we have made. It is generally if not universally: (1.) that, in conversion, they receive a new life, manifesting powers and functions entirely spiritual, and different from any they have before exhibited; as before this they have proved that "to be carnally minded is death," they now prove that "to be spiritually minded is life and peace:" (2.) that with regeneration they have received but an imperfect sanctification; or, in other words, that God has commenced to sanctify the souls which he has regenerated, making the progression and completion of the work depend upon conditions

which he has clearly revealed: (3.) that, so far from being identical, regeneration may be truly affirmed of those who are in all stages of sanctification, and only a few profess or believe that they are sanctified wholly, whereas all Christians claim to be and really are regenerated: (4.) that the great business and chief difficulty of all regenerate men is to secure their entire sanctification. This is the great question between them and God on the one hand, and Satan on the other; and, too generally, it takes nearly the whole of probation to settle it. Now the strength of this argument is in the circumstance that it is of the nature of fact and utterly undeniable.

4. The Scriptures conclusively settle the question. They plainly assume the distinction. To sinners God says, "Ye must be born again;" to the regenerate, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." In this exhortation they persist with the greatest possible earnestness. "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." The great apostle was, therefore, aware that these Christian brethren, "dearly beloved," had yet need of cleansing "from filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness." Again: Knowing that there was such a thing as being sanctified but in part, and aware that this was the real condition of his brethren at Thessalonica, as it is of Christians generally, in his most fervent devotions he prayed, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." Quotations are unnecessary. The whole tenor of Scripture upon this subject assumes that the merely regenerate have need of further sanctifi-

cation. They, and they only, are the persons to whom it is offered; who are required, by the most positive command, to "go on to perfection," and encouraged by the most gracious promises to expect the blessing, in answer to believing prayer — "Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it."

If, then, there is a broad and necessary distinction between a soul spiritually alive, and the moral condition of the living spirit — if the terms regeneration and sanctification are strictly and only appropriate to the production of spiritual life, and to the treatment of the soul so brought to life, and cannot be used interchangeably — if the experience of all Christians recognizes this distinction, which is really so far from being questionable, that it is the great duty and work of all regenerate persons to secure the progress and ultimate completion of the work of sanctification — and if, for this purpose, the Holy Scriptures address to them the most pointed declarations of want, the most peremptory commands to go forward to its acquisition, and the most gracious assurances of success, — then regeneration is not sanctification, and regeneration is not the central idea of Christianity.

We have now reached, in our analysis, the great fact to which we were guided in our Scripture test, as affording the true explanation of the whole gospel scheme — perfect purity — the choice of God for the moral condition of the human race. Let the work of sanctification, which commences at the time of regeneration, go on to its completion; let the inward foes which were then conquered be slain and exterminated, — so that those who at first could only say, "Being justified

by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," now say, with equal assurance, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" and this must be precisely the thing which God saw at the beginning was necessary to counteract the evil which had been done; and reproduce the moral state from which man had fallen. To accomplish this he instituted the scheme of redemption. If it was for any object less than this, then the divine purposes could be harmonized with the permanent existence of sin in his redeemed ones. But we have taken up, one by one, the facts and principles, and operations of the system, and found no one of them that could stand alone — that could explain all the rest, and entirely answer to the divine will — until we reached that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." This is a principle independent of all others, in its essential character. It existed prior to all gospel institutions and remedial acts. It is an object of such immense importance as to justify the vast arrangements of the remedial dispensation. It explains every one of them; and, if we suppose it absent from the system, they all immediately become unintelligible and valueless. To do less for man than to make him holy would be, in effect, to do nothing for him; and to do this is to do all. Holiness is, therefore, the central sun which pours its glorious light through every part of the system, and illustrates every thing which it contains. Remove it, and all is dark as midnight.

Let us, however, test the matter still further. Going again to the outside of the scheme, let us approach the centre from another direction. There are certain requi-

sitions of the gospel which are evidently fundamental. Take that great one which includes all others: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc. The question now is, What moral condition of the soul is capable of this result? You observe Christian love that is mingled with fear. This you trace to a state of imperfect sanctification. But find the outbeamings of that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear," in the countenance — in every feeling — in every word — in every act, and trace them to their home in the inner being, and you will find it perfectly pure. You will say in raptures to that child of God, "Being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." The same is certainly true of every one of the Christian graces — of every attempt at obedience. Those which, from their mixed character, must be condemned, not merely by the flaming law, but by the high standard of perfection made attainable by the gospel, can be traced, in every instance, to an unsanctified state of the heart, showing that something yet remains to be done to complete the work of purification; and those which meet this standard, can be traced to a state of perfect inward purity. How clearly, then, this purity — the state which originally gave out these manifestations, and which alone can now produce them — is and must be the centre of the remedial system!

But, finally, let us take our position in heaven, and thence move out into the kingdom of grace until we reach its centre. The question now is, What state of mind is a full preparation for heaven? Here everything is holy. God — the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

—reigns in holiness, immaculate and infinite; the angels shine in unsullied purity; and the saints, having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," are without a stain. Not an impure thought or feeling, desire or motive, can be found in all that bright world. The employments of the place are suited only to holy beings. And going out to find the persons adjusted to the place, we reject all others, and by universal consent accept the souls cleansed from all unrighteousness. The most splendid talents would be no substitute for holiness; the brightest genius the world ever saw must pause at the gate of this celestial paradise, if a spot of sin be found upon his garments.

Let no man assert, by way of objection to this position, that all truly converted persons, who do not backslide, are safe. If it is meant that justification and regeneration are intended to supersede entire sanctification —that they are of themselves a preparation for that holy place—the position is dangerously false. If it is intended to claim that a state of continued justification includes the assurance of entire sanctification,—or, in other words, that he who retains the favor of God, must and will press on to the point of entire purification,—it is a glorious truth; but as this is, therefore, a mere question of the mode and probability of reaching a particular state, it in no way affects the argument we have adduced, to show that this state of purity is of itself, however or whenever reached, a full preparation, and the only preparation for heaven.

Thus we see that, from whatever point we commence our analysis, we reach the same result. All the other great facts and duties which the system includes, all the

operations of divine grace upon the heart, are but so many means to this glorious end — all lead directly in to holiness at the centre. The results which are fully in accordance with the expressed will of God, all point directly back to it; and, coming out from heaven itself, to find the true preparation for that glorious place, we ascertain it to be holiness alone. Carefully examining every particular of the system, within our reach, we find nothing else that will, as an end, meet the demands of the Almighty, explain the vast details of the remedial scheme, or account for the splendid results of that scheme in this world and in the next. By the test of analysis, then, as well as of revelation, holiness is the central idea of Christianity.

SEC. III. THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT.

Our next appeal is to history. And the question raised here, is, What is the law of religious development and power as an agent of reform? Or, in other words, regarding Christianity as the one grand agent, ordained by the Almighty to reform the world, in proportion to what has it been successful?

The following facts are beyond question. An individual professor takes his place in the church. He has wealth, and uses it freely for the benefit of the organization. He has talents, and they are zealously devoted to the defence of the church. He has popular influence, and he uses it to gather proselytes to the faith. But his piety is superficial. Words escape him every day which show that they come from an impure fountain.

He is, in spirit, a man of the world, and he has very little power to reform men. He may induce them to attend his church, and even to join it; but in all his efforts to reform them he feels that he is weak, and they turn away in disgust, or look to others for their models, and advice. But let this same man improve in his piety, and his power to do good at once begins to increase. Let him approximate nearer and nearer the standard of Christian perfection, and it will be seen that his spiritual power increases in exact proportion.

On the other hand, take a man whose heart is entirely consecrated; whose pure life indicates purity of heart, whose holy example commands universal respect, whose simple, unpretending efforts move all who hear his voice in prayer, or praise, or exhortation. Now, let him yield to temptation,—admit corruption into his heart, —and how soon it is seen that he is shorn of his strength! Just in proportion as he recedes from his elevated position in Christian holiness, his power of usefulness diminishes. Nor can he supply this deficiency by any other element. He who loses his purity may strive to save his power by increase of zeal, by enlarged charities, by the severest austerities; but it is all of no avail. He makes himself a living proof that holiness is the measure of power.

A comparison of two men in the ministry will strengthen this conclusion. One is a man of shining talents, of genteel address, of popular eloquence; the other, ordinary in all these respects—in all natural qualities, the inferior of his brother. But he is a man of God—a man of faith. His soul is filled with love —"perfect love that casteth out fear." He moves

among the people like a spirit from eternity. His rebukes of sin fall with dreadful force upon the hearts of the wicked. His sermons, his prayers, his expostulations, his tears, all indicate the presence of an extraordinary power; and thousands are converted, sanctified, and saved through his instrumentality. But the other man sees no such fruits of his labor. Souls may be converted, but he feels that it is in spite of him rather than through his instrumentality. He wonders at the difference. He increases his exertions — elaborates his sermons with more learning and research — improves their rhetoric and oratory, but all to little purpose. He may increase the admiration of his hearers, but he cannot subdue their hearts, bring them weeping to the foot of the cross, and present them with joy as the trophies of the Redeemer. But let him seek and obtain the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Let fire from God's altar touch his lips and purify his soul, and he is a new man. He does not throw away his talents, his genius, his learning; but they are all sanctified. With the simplicity of a child, and a heart overflowing with love, he preaches the truth, and it is "in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power," and a glorious reformation follows. Whatever may be the seeming variations arising from the deficiency of our knowledge, we have, in these particular instances, strong historic indications of a general law.

What is true of individuals is true of churches also. Wherever a number of Christians have associated together, with the evident and exclusive aim of promoting purity of heart and life, they have prospered. Their creed may have included strange inconsistencies—

their forms and ceremonies may have frequently been the offspring of conceit, and devoid of taste — they may have been generally uneducated and without the advantages of wealth or influential friends, — but with a supreme devotion to experimental holiness they have revealed an inner spiritual and powerful life, which has defied all persecution, and survived the rage of enemies.

Upon the other hand, churches having the purest creed ever drawn from the Sacred Records, combining the accumulated wealth, and learning, and power of ages, have perished in the very midst of their greatness, simply by becoming corrupt. We affirm that there is not a superannuated Christian denomination in history, whose decline has not been in exact proportion to its sins. Not unfrequently have men been amazed at the want of reformatory power in Christian communions of vast extent and influence, exhibiting many signs of external prosperity. But God has been witness to their departure from Christian simplicity and purity, and written "Ichabod" upon their sacred altars and splendid temples.

Finally: the most profound attention to the history of the general church will show the same unvarying truth. Under the influence of apostolic purity, the early victories of the cross were as decisive in the reformation of individual character and public manners, as they were unparalleled in their extent and power. But the gradual departure from primitive simplicity, and the immense accumulation of corruption in heart and life which followed, by slow degrees destroyed the power of the church to act as a reforming agent, and that long, dark night of a thousand years, which closed

in upon her spiritual vision, was a night of corruption. When the Reformation dawned, it showed the most revolting spectacles of vice, pervading all classes, from the obscure monk to the haughty prelate in the pretended chair of St. Peter. Honest minds were alarmed at the revelation; and as the noble men who led the movement humbled themselves before God, "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully," they began to acquire the power to benefit the race, which had been lost by apostasy; and just in proportion to their purity they became actual and successful reformers. The history of that great work of God which commenced through their instrumentality, extends to every land on the face of the earth, and on into eternity, illustrating at every step of its progress the great principle which we are endeavoring to develop.

The Wesleyan reformation was eminently a movement in favor of holiness. The true doctrine of Christian Perfection was perhaps more clearly taught and powerfully enforced than at any former time since the days of primitive purity. And while the great mass of converts made it their aim, large numbers pressed on to the actual experience and living demonstration of the power of Christ to cleanse from all sin. And mark the result: "No weapon formed against them could prevail." From the feeblest beginnings, without wealth, without power, in the midst of the most violent persecutions, they have moved on in a career of usefulness unparalleled since the days of the apostles.

Now this uniformity of facts, extending from individuals up through special Christian organizations, to the general

church, and pervading all ecclesiastical history, can be the result of no accident. It shows with the force of demonstration that holiness is the great law of religious development, and hence that holiness is the central idea of Christianity.

SEC. IV. THE EXPERIMENTAL ARGUMENT.

Our final appeal is to experience. And here the heart of every man must answer for itself. If the grand design of the gospel be any thing less than perfect purity, then the soul can find full rest without it. If it be only pardon and regeneration, then the discovery of remaining corruptions ought to be no cause of uneasiness; the prayers of those who groan for full redemption ought to be unheeded; or, if relief be found, it ought to be in some other system—through some other name than the name of Jesus.

But what facts does experience reveal? Why, that a deep and painful sense of inward impurity may remain after all guilt is washed away; that in the midst of the divine comforts of adoption the soul longs for the rest of perfect love; that the more devoted the life of the regenerate Christian, the more intense is his desire to be cleansed from all sin, and while he is without the evidence of this finished work, he has more or less of fear for the future. By the most powerful internal convictions, and the most obvious tendencies of every work of grace that has heretofore been wrought upon his heart, he is urged on to this glorious consummation. And it is not in accordance with experience that he who sighs for puri-

ty of heart must sigh in vain—that he who cries, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," must pray in vain. From numerous examples in Scripture, from the testimonies of thousands long since gone to their reward, and of thousands still living, the declaration of Jesus is amply sustained: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." So far were they from being compelled to look to other systems and other names for deliverance, that they declare with the utmost confidence it was well said by the angel, "And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins;" for we have in our hearts the divine assurance that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

And precisely as it ought to be, if this is the centre of the scheme, here the soul finds rest—here perfect satisfaction. All its desires, all its passions, all its plans are in complete harmony with the will of God. From this sanctified state it can develop itself without inward obstruction—from this position it can expand and advance with freedom and power. The growth of the spirit, which in its original purity must certainly have been infinite, has been sadly interrupted by its dreadful disease. And since the cure commenced it has been much retarded by the remains of the disease. But, now that the cure is complete, and faith is strong and active, growth in grace is free, natural, and rapid. It is true the effects of this malady may long remain after the remedy has been thoroughly successful. Infirmities of body and mind, which constantly need the compassion of God, the merits of Christ, and the charity of men, will press upon us till our probation ends; but, in spite of them all, the soul in a

state of perfect salvation, rises, enlarges, and triumphs, as it could never have done under any but a remedial system.

Thus directly and inevitably does experience conduct us to holiness as the great want of immortal man—the grand design of redemption.

We have now examined this question in the light of the Holy Scriptures, and found that this stupendous system of revelation and redeeming mercy was undertaken "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." We have subjected the scheme to the severest analysis. Moving inward from different positions outside of it, we have found holiness alone at its centre. We have consulted history and experience, and found that in fact holiness is the measure of power. We are compelled, therefore, by the strictest logical necessity, to assert that holiness is the central idea of Christianity.

SEC. V. THE ARGUMENT APPLIED.

It will, we think, at once be perceived that we have reached a position of immense practical importance. If this be the true central idea of the Christian scheme, we may try everything by it, which, in the lapse of centuries has come to be attached to this scheme. Evidently enough, whatever has no adaptation to produce entire sanctification in the hearts of believers,—"to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,"—does not belong to the system, and must be promptly rejected.

From the nature of God it must be certain that he

has made no mistakes in the details of a system designed to restore to man his lost image; and it is wonderful to see with what skill and directness he has adjusted everything to this grand aim. He has revealed his fiery law, which flames out in wrath against all species of sin. He has exhibited the immaculate purity of his own character, which causes seraphim to cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." He has uttered the unchangeable law to his people, "Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy." He provided a Redeemer, whose blood made ample atonement for all sin. He gave the Holy Ghost to awaken, to regenerate, and to sanctify us. He gave his word to teach us the necessity of holiness. He moved men of strong faith to pray for the blessing in behalf of his people, and sketched with the pen of inspiration the characters and lives of those who had reached this glorious perfection. He bade us "mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." He established the ministry to explain to us the way of holiness, to rouse us from the slumbers of sin, and persuade us to "lay hold on eternal life." He provided the church to cherish and build us up from our feeble infancy, and aid us to "go on to perfection." He gave us the holy sacraments to bind us to himself, and keep us perpetually in mind of the cleansing blood. Indeed it may be safely said that while every thing which God has instituted for man is most evidently designed and adapted to lead to purity of heart, he has omitted nothing which is essential to this result.

But how is it with man? Alas! he has too frequently "perverted the right way of the Lord." There is much

in the faith, and forms, and practice of the different branches of the church, to show that the great idea of holiness has been denied its central position, and that others of far less importance, and even wholly untrue, have been assumed in its stead. Let us test these three particulars far enough to indicate in a slight degree, the power of a central idea in the formation of opinions, and the adjustment of subordinate parts of a system, and the importance of a correct development of that idea, in attempts to ascertain our position, to detect our errors, and establish ourselves in the truth.

Let it be inquired, for instance, how the doctrine of fate, in any of its forms, came to be incorporated into the creeds of the Christian denominations. And taking holiness as the central idea of the system, we cannot account for it. Holiness is a moral state. Its restoration is a moral result; but there can be no moral quality without freedom. God cannot change to be pleased at one time, with that which displeased him at another. The law cannot change to render that holy which it once condemned. There must therefore be a change in the sinner, or he must retain his corruptions forever. He may be graciously aided and encouraged to put forth the volition upon which the moral change depends. But he must put it forth, or no change in his moral state is practicable. To say that God could, by any act of authority or power, cleanse a sinner unconditionally, is saying no more than that the same offensive thing, the same corrupt state, and the same vicious acts, can be regarded and treated by him differently at different times. Let the sovereignty of God be the central idea, and we can easily see how it would produce this doctrine. If

he designed, in the structure of the Christian scheme, merely to illustrate his independence of man, and the fact of his unlimited control over the thoughts and feelings, and purposes of the human race, then he might have excluded man from all participation in the events of his government, excepting as a passive recipient of almighty power. He might then have efficiently secured the fall and all its succession of evils. But if he intended to purify the hearts of men by faith in the blood of Christ, he would undoubtedly leave them free to exercise that faith. In the same way divine sovereignty, assumed as the central idea, could account for the doctrine of certain final perseverance, the doctrine of doubt or uncertainty in regard to adoption, and of necessary indwelling sin. For beyond question, absolute sovereignty would be illustrated by withholding repentance and faith, pardon and sanctification, from all but those whom God had determined to save. The witness of the Spirit would be incompatible with possible subsequent evidence of reprobation; and as the final disposition of the soul would depend upon God's sovereign pleasure, a state of full salvation here would interfere with that uncertainty to man, and appearance of contingency, which had been predetermined, and is a necessary part of the system.

Again: it is impossible, upon the theory developed in this discussion, to explain the introduction of certain universal salvation into any faith nominally Christian. If we are right, holiness is an indispensable prerequsite of happiness in heaven or elsewhere; and though this is also roundly asserted by the errorists to whom we refer, it does not belong to the system, which plainly provides for the final salvation of those who die in a state of deep-

est corruption, as inevitably and unconditionally as for the purest of Christians. And the wholly gratuitous and merely nominal introduction of holiness into the scheme cannot save it, as in the absence of volition, or the obstinate rejection of the atonement, there is no way to produce it. Happiness must be the central idea of Universalism — happiness, irrespective of character or condition. Employ this idea to construct a system of theology, and it would of course reject all punishment in another world, or, at least, make the suffering due to sin as slight, and terminate it as soon as possible.

It would, in like manner, be impossible to account for the doctrine of priestly intervention, the real presence, the worship of saints, the celibacy of the clergy, and of purgatory, by assuming holiness as the central idea of Christianity. With this for a forming power, we want as little as possible of the merely human, the material, the ceremonial in the system. The most direct possible way to the mercy of God, and the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost, must be the law of this spiritual organism; and this is plainly through faith in Christ, and nothing else. But take political power for the central idea of a system, and see how inevitably it requires and produces the very doctrines we have mentioned. The head of the organization must then be a monarch, clothed with absolute authority over the souls and bodies of men. His subordinate officers of state must be taken from the ranks of the clergy. The importance of the priest must be magnified by the exclusive right to dispense the souls of men, and the people must be compelled to literal obedience, by their hope of heaven, and their dread of eternal damnation. That which from the

nature of the case can only be spiritually present, and apprehended by faith must be physically and literally present, and be made palpable to the senses. The objects of worship must be material or human, like the worshippers; and hence appreciable by the intellect, without faith. An appearance of sanctity, extending even to the denial of lawful desires in holy wedlock, must divert the attention of the people from gross sensuality; and as preparation for heaven here, in the mode required is, to the understandings of all, an acknowledged failure, it is necessary to make arrangements for its consummation in another life. All these, with their nameless kindred errors, are given in political domination as a central idea.

In the same way will the application of this obvious test reveal what is merely human and artificial in the outward forms and ceremonies of the church. We have seen that holiness assumed as the grand object of the Christian scheme, leaves room for little that is merely instrumental, and with the greatest possible directness leads the sinner into his own heart, and thence to the mercy of God. If this be the object, whatever obstructs his way, or retards his movements, must be foreign to the system, and ruinous to the soul. It is obvious, then, that this idea could never have added to the sacraments of baptism, and the Lord's supper, those of confirmation penance, extreme unction, holy orders and matrimony. But a moment's reflection will show how legitimately the false position of each arises from the political central power, which we have assumed as the origin of a false system. The novice must not be allowed to have reached a state of spiritual security, nor acquired a right to the blessings of the new covenant, until that security is

obtained, and that right recognized by priestly intervention. Self-inflicted tortures, which accord with a sensational, in distinction from a spiritual religion, must be prescribed by the priest, upon obedience to whom the wretch depends for the relief of conscience. Justification by faith destroys the political power of the priest. The diseased or dying man, instead of looking to rational remedies and the grace of God in the hour of trial, must be taught that his safety, in body and soul, depends upon the presence and good dispositions of his ghostly confessor, who uses with official efficacy the anointing oil. The same officer is clothed with authority, which in no sense depends upon purity of heart, or virtuousness of life; which, reaching back in prelatical succession to the apostles, is irrevocable in its rights, conclusive in its functions, and, above all moral contigency whatsoever. And finally, the domestic relations must depend on the the same prerogatives. No matrimonial alliance can be valid unless sanctioned by a Romish priest. But to make all this practicable, these rights must be elevated to the dignity and solemnity of sacraments, and hence, of course, depend entirely upon the will of the clergy. In this manner, a vast centralizing scheme is constructed, combining all the elements of immense political power.

But the theoretical is not always the practical central idea. Systems are gradually formed and modified under the control of views and aims which are widely different from those which originated them. The ever-changing ideal of man, in relation to the true good, does not allow of permanency and consistency in the institutions and means relied upon to produce it. A succession of clear, stern, and powerful minds may, it is true, preserve for

ages the great idea upon which a vast scheme of selfish interest depends; but multitudes who are visibly arranged under its banner will be practically severed from it by an inherent independence of thought, and a greater or less submission to the guidance of an invisible hand.

It will hence occur, that many who adopt as a whole a theory which makes the sovereignty of God the central idea of Christianity, will, in fact, feel that sin is their only real evil, and recognize the gospel as a grand provision of mercy for their deliverance from it. And thus thousands, whose creed actually denies the possibility of deliverance from all sin in this life, are striving, with all their might, to reach this result; and thousands have doubtless succeeded, thus making holiness the practical, while something else was the theoretical centre; and, we may as well say it, for it is a momentous truth, in the present condition of theological systems, the safety of a vast majority of nominal Christians depends upon this real contradiction.

Upon the other hand, the true central idea may be adopted in theory, and renounced in practice. The clearest possible recognition of the truth may have been handed down to us by our fathers. In our creeds and standard authors we may be taught, "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;" and yet we may show by our lives that a much lower aim has been accepted in its stead. Indeed, to

many who have before God and the world declared their firm belief in the great doctrine of holiness, mere justification has become the central idea of religion. A sense of forgiveness is all they ask, and they direct all their efforts to this point. Others aim simply at regularity of external life, and their best resolutions of reform extend no farther; while, alas! multitudes of others have formally adopted the honor of self, the gratification of worldly desires, or the splendor of an organization, as the real centre of their religion.

It appears, therefore, that to accept in theory the central idea which God has revealed, is not enough. What men admit to be the divine purpose in the establishment of Christianity is not the great question; but how far, in feeling, in motive, in design, and effort, do they agree with this purpose? The real, not the ideal, the practical, not the theoretical central idea, moves the heart and controls the life; and with the great majority of nominal Christians, it must be admitted, this is any thing but holiness.

But we cannot conclude this discussion without inquiring, Why must the doctrine of holiness be assigned a subordinate place in systematic divinity, or even be excluded altogether? We have seen that this was not the intention of God; and, so far from retracting the true evangelical view of the doctrine, or apologizing to the world for the importance we have given it, we must in all candor ask pardon of God and man for having asserted it so timidly, dwelt upon it with so little pathos and power, and so seldom reduced it to practice. It is the centre of our system. The mission which we have accepted at the hands of God, is "to spread scriptural

holiness over these lands;" and we cannot allow the doctrine a secondary, or inoperative place in the faith of the church. It must come out from its obscurity, extend its light, and its controlling power through every communion, and permeate the doctrines, the hearts, and the lives of the people, before Christianity can assert its rights in the conquest of the world. In the presence of Christians of every name, we demand for it the position which God has assigned it. What worthy motive can we have in denying it this position? Opposition to holiness is opposition to Christianity—a real, though not an intended denial of the rights of God and the privileges of man—a setting aside of the one grand object for which the Redeemer died and the church was instituted. And when this is done, what have we left? What one doctrine of the gospel is of any use, or of any significance, if holiness is excluded from the system? As well might you tear out the heart, and then attempt to give value to the veins and arteries and blood, as to reject holiness and still hope to save the gospel scheme. As well might you burn up your towns and leave your guide-boards standing, as to destroy holiness, and still insist upon justification by faith, or any other great doctrine of Christianity.

But, what is the effect of admitting the true position of this idea? It cuts off at a stroke the vast multitude of improvements which men have dared to attach to the system. It condemns all our extravagance in style, our follies in outward forms, and our sins of heart and life. It shows every man the value of his work. If he prays, or speaks, or sings, for the exhibition of his talents, or for the gratification of others, it is all to no purpose.

Nay, he is condemned for the perversion of the most sacred services. We value a popular harangue for its power to please and move the multitude, and a lecture for its learning; but upon the principle we have developed, we must value a sermon for its adaptation to promote the holiness of men. What a shameful abuse of a sacred profession it must be, for a man sent out in the name of God to save sinners, to value his performances for their abstract learning, their rhetorical elegance, their oratorical power, or popular effect! Let any man clearly apprehend the fearful wrong and deadly evil of sin; let him see that God has given his Son to make its removal from the hearts of men possible, and sent him expressly to proclaim this great salvation, and we are sure he will feel that fidelity to his Master requires that he should frame every sermon with reference to this great end; and he will be satisfied with his effort only in proportion to the power with which he has exposed sin, attacked it in its most insidious forms, paralyzed its influence, and gained the advantage for that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. What a vast amount of preaching is found, by this rule, to be worse than trifling!

Finally: it is evident, that, in its spirit and aim, the Christian system stands alone. We have numerous organizations for the improvement of society—for the production of wealth—for the gratification of ambition—for the relief of human suffering; but only one for the promotion of holiness. We know of no other that professes to "purify the heart." What strange infatuation, then, it must be to secularize this system!—to bring it down from the lofty purposes to which it was consecrated, and

appropriate it to the service of worldly glory, and force it to gratify a lust for power. Wherever this has been done, it cannot be deemed strange that "blasting and mildew" have followed in the train. Indeed, nothing is easier now than to explain the slow progress of Christianity, the feebleness of its disciples, and the reproach which has so often fallen upon the church. Would that all Christians might be agreed upon this one thing—to consider Christianity as set apart to the work of purifying the hearts and lives of men. For all other purposes there are associations enough, while in the range of human thought there is no other that has the slightest claim to adaptation to produce this result. Precisely this is the desideratum of the times; and not until it is supplied shall we see the church shining in her own pure light, and moving on in the greatness of her strength to the conquest of the world. Happy is he who contributes, even in the smallest degree to this glorious result.

CHAPTER II.

THE CENTRAL IDEA DEFINED.

SEC. I. THE PRACTICAL LIMITATIONS OF THE IDEA.

WITHOUT holiness no man shall see the Lord. How important, then, that we should understand it! Subsequent to the radical change which takes place in conversion, there is certainly a work of grace upon the heart, and a corresponding result in the life, included in the plan of salvation, the conditions of which are imperatively binding upon Christians. In some high and important sense we are to be "sanctified wholly," made "holy," "cleansed from all sin," be rendered "perfect," filled with "perfect love." It is precisely this work which we propose to define; and to prevent misconstruction, let us state certain negative limitations, which will very much diminish the sphere of controversy.

1. It must be limited by the capacities and susceptibilities of fallen human nature. These are created, and hence, of necessity, finite. He who should obey the command, "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" would not therefore be a perfect God, but a perfect Christian, and between the highest degree of human perfection and the perfection of God, there would be the difference between the finite

and the infinite. The Christian perfection which we advocate is not divine, and, hence, has none of the characteristics of divinity, as infallible judgment and unchangeable holiness. The liability to fall into sin, and deserve eternal death, certainly cannot be less than that of Adam in Paradise, perfect as he was when he came from the hands of his Maker.

If we were furnished with data for complete comparison of man in his best estate, with angels in heaven, we should undoubtedly find many important particulars in which the human would be inferior to the angelic. Our views of angelic character, so far as they are drawn from Scripture, assign them a higher rank, in power and excellence, than could be true of man. However this may be, we do not speak of the excellence of man in reference to any angelic standard. We can conceive of human frailties and defects, which may co-exist with the very best intentions, but would be inadmissible in the perfect state of angelic being. It is human capability and no other to which these exalted Scriptures refer.

But the capabilities of fallen human nature must be less than those of our original parents. Even the complete destruction of sin would not destroy all its effects. As the man of dissolute habits, however perfectly reformed, must bear to his grave the injuries of health and constitution, which have been the result of his indiscretions and crimes, so, human beings, however entirely delivered from indwelling sin, will still retain the inaccuracies of moral discrimination, the feebleness of judgment, the moral decrepitude, which have resulted from their depravity of character and conduct. As a consequence, on the whole, inevitable, there will be

errors in judgment, mistakes in practice, in the best condition of humanity. We do not, therefore, teach Adamic perfection for fallen human nature. By just so much as the intellectual, moral, and physical standard of human capacity has been lowered by sin, must the "highest attainable excellence" now, be less than before the fall.

Nor can we regard the perfection taught in the Bible as legal perfection, or, such as in itself could stand the rigor of divine justice. The law of God is the true and only standard of right, as it existed in his own mind, prior to its announcement. Like its Author, it is faultless and immutable. It was made for man as man, with all the powers originally given him, and the destruction of those powers by sin could have no tendency to modify its claims. What it was right for man to do, and just for God to require, previous to the fall, must have been right and just after it, must be right and just, now and for ever. The debtor, who, by abuse of his own privileges, disposes of the means to pay, thereby rendering it impossible to pay, does by no means thus discharge the debt, nor does the law exonerate him on such account, or adjust the claims or rights of the creditor to the reduced and destitute condition of the debtor. God could by no means authorize or tolerate, at one time, that which he had condemned at another. He never could exact less — he never has exacted, and never will exact less, than the perfect conformity of all the unimpaired, physical, intellectual, and moral abilities of created man, to what he knew, what he now knows, and always will know to be the duty of such created intelligences towards their Creator. Unless, therefore,

the breaking of a law has some tendency to destroy it, the stern law of sinless perfection is in full force at this day, in regard to man as man.

But this is far from being the assumed or actual condition of man, in his holiest earthly state. With his whole heart cleansed from sin, such are its susceptibilities of moral defilement as that, left to itself for a moment, it would again receive the stains of sin. With its fullest affections absorbed in God, if not mercifully sustained, these affections would instantly wander. With all the energies, physical, intellectual and moral, consecrated to God, they would be enfeebled, erring, and, in some respects, constantly failing energies. But God's immutable law makes no allowances for these failures in character or in action, in thought, feeling, or purpose, in word or deed, past, present, or to come. In whatever sense, therefore, redeemed man may ever be regarded as perfect, it cannot be in a legal sense.

And there are other reasons for the same view. Among men,—Christian men, there is an infinite variety of capacity; a variety which never ceases, and, of course, there are relatively all grades and variations of perfection in the services rendered to their Maker. If, therefore, this perfection be legal, then there is no one grand, perfect, and unchangeable rule of right, to which all men are alike responsible, but there is an indefinite number of laws; as many as there are individuals, and even these with no single attribute of permanence, but ever varying to suit the constantly changing ability of the moral agent! And the only effect of voluntarily or otherwise weakening our ability, is to produce an instant modification of the law to suit our impaired condition!

All hence that a sinner would have to do to destroy the force of a law, binding upon him at one time, in view of a given and actual condition of his moral powers, would be to do violence to those powers; for, upon the ground denied in this argument, the law would immediately lower its claims to his reduced ability, and with all his glaring defects, simply doing as well as he then could do, he would be legally perfect. His moral character and condition, which, before the reduction of his ability, would have been, by his previous law, sternly condemned, has, by such reduction, become exactly what God requires, and would now stand the rigor of divine justice! Upon this theory, law would be no general principle, but a concatenation of disconnected facts, or, in other words, law would not be law! We can have no such unworthy views of God or his government. Whatever changes are going on among men, he is unchangeable, and however infinite the variety in human character, his rule of right must be invariable.

And yet these defects are actual, and, in one form or another, universal. The capacity of man for virtue and piety never can be what it might have been, if no moral paralysis had seized it. Every Christian feels more or less of this feebleness, and marks with deep regret and humble penitence, the failures which result from it. Not one, who is endowed with true humility, could think of comparison with the stern law of God, without shrinking in terror. Not one who, informed that for everything which exists within him, and which has appeared in his outward life to the severe eye of God, he must prepare himself to go unprotected and unatoned, to the judgment, would not be overwhelmed

in despair; and, beyond all question, multitudes have found acceptance with God, whose disabilities are, and must forever remain, much greater than those which arise necessarily out of hereditary depravity; so enfeebling to the moral powers, are the effects of actual transgression, and especially of early dissolute habits. The law is, therefore, surely not the standard of Christian perfection.

If now, it be asked, how these positions can be harmonized — the law uncompromising in its claims, and yet the purest and best of Christians, in actual character and attainments, defective in comparison with it, we answer, "The law is our school-master to bring us to Christ." God's plan of saving men is not by the law — not upon conditions of faultless conformity to its claims, but of entire dependence upon our Advocate and Redeemer. It is "by grace through faith." This is the glory of the system. Christ is our dependence, not only for the merit that pardons, and the blood which cleanses from all sin, but also for magnifying the law and making it honorable, — meeting the claims of the law for us, in all the particulars of unavoidable defects. For this very reason the best of men may say, with propriety,

"Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death."

2. This idea must be limited by the law of progression. This law, in its unvarying application to all Christians, is, "but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Increase in capacity, is the law of our being, the law most obstinately antagonized by sin, and which must act with

freedom and power, just in proportion to the extent and completeness of our deliverance from sin. When, therefore, we are called upon to "go on unto perfection," it cannot be perfection in development. The work of sanctification in progress after our conversion, can, therefore, in no sense, be the growth of the soul, though it is doubtless, in a high sense, the condition of its growth. Unless it be true that we are required to grow from our infant state in the sense of expansion, increase or enlargement of the powers redeemed, up to a perfection which admits of no further growth, the only perfection offered us in the Bible is perfection in character—in the state of our moral natures, in the condition of our regenerate powers, and not in growth or development. The work of renovating the inner man is to be completed. The conditions of the largest, fullest, freest growth in grace, are to be perfected. By Christian perfection, or entire sanctification then, we by no means intend any form of completeness beyond which we cannot advance.

The definition of entire sanctification is thus confined to a very small compass, and made comparatively easy. It is limited by the capacities and susceptibilities of fallen human nature. It does not, therefore, raise man to the perfection of the Godhead, nor of angels, nor of Adam. It is not legal perfection. It is not perfection in development. But what is it?

SEC. II. THE CONTENTS OF THE IDEA.

We now proceed to answer the question with which the last section closed, or, in other words, to ascertain the contents of this central idea.

Its general expression is "perfect love;" love to God without mixture of slavish fear; love to man without selfishness; love which springs up in the soul at the time of conversion, increasing, extending, conquering, and wholly superseding all love of the world, in its wealth, its honors, its pleasures; all forms of self-love which seek to make the demands of self superior to the claims of God or the rights of man—love filling the soul, controlling the intellect, sensibilities and will, becoming the source of thought, feeling and action;—realizing the exact spirit of those great commandments "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." However enfeebled the powers of the entirely sanctified, however less than those of primitive man, and though, from the fact of being impaired by sin, of necessity for ever less than the law requires, yet he is accepted for Christ's sake, always needing, and always having the full merit of his death. It is the perfect realization of God's plan of salvation,—poor, feeble, helpless man, merging himself entirely in Christ; "complete in him," and in no single respect—in no single moment, without him.

But to be more particular, we understand this great whole of perfect love to be inclusive of the following facts and results:

1. Entire consecration. The terms which we are endeavoring to explain, imply this.- A leading idea of sanctification and also of holiness, is separation, setting apart from a common to a sacred use. Hence, the utensils of the temple service, never, under any circumstances, to be devoted to common or ordinary use, were sanctified — holy — consecrated.

By the action of sin, man's created powers have been alienated from their original sacred use, have been given up to common, to profane use. To this the responsible agent has consented. Voluntary devotion to self, to the world, to sin, has become the great crime of man — the crime of ingratitude, of rebellion, of robbery indeed, for it takes from God what is justly his due. Now, how can the approbation of God be fully enjoyed until this alienation of his rights be remedied? In conversion, the consecration to God is sincere, but not discriminating. The further study of the heart, the aid of genuine experience, and the searching power of God's Holy Spirit, will, in nearly, if not quite all cases, reveal defects in the consecration — will bring to our notice strongly marked mental reservations, in favor of our own way. We see that, in many things, we choose our own way, in distinction from God's way, and detect ourselves in practically carrying out our own wills, in preference to God's will. We see it, feel it, repent of it, mourn and grieve over it, seek and obtain forgiveness for it, and yet find it returning, with more or less power, evincing what is unquestionably true, that the source of the difficulty is within us, that a more complete and final separation of conscious self, from fallen worldly

and selfish elements, is indispensable to required success in the Christian life.

Now, that state of perfect love, which we seek to define, implies this entire and finished separation, so that between the two great spiritual powers, always in probation, contending for our souls and bodies, there shall henceforth be no dallying, no vascillation, no vibrating from one to the other; but God shall have the whole — the soul and body, the intellect, the affections, the desires, the will, property, talents, genius, learning, friends, time, eternity, — all considerately, solemnly, voluntarily, handed over to God, so that, henceforth, the consecrated Christian has actually nothing which is not held as belonging to him, does nothing but aims at the exact realization of his will — reckons all blessings as coming from him, and hence is completely absorbed in the divine will, and the divine glory. This is one fact included in the central idea of Christianity.

2. It includes perfect faith. In the hearts of Christians, generally, there is a strong tendency to distrust the assurances of God;—no recognized, willing distrust — no deliberate contradiction or denial of God's holy word. This would bring them into condemnation. But the unsanctified heart trusts more fully what we know to be true, or even think, or suppose, or desire to be true, than what God has asserted or proposed. We do not at first lose our propensity to criticize, to modify, or at least to comprehend, and somehow, rationally demonstrate, the great scheme of redemption. We are hence, conscious of much halting, hesitating, and not unfrequently compelled to grapple with absolute doubt, when seeking to confide in Jehovah's word — to throw

ourselves upon the atonement, and appropriate the fulness of the divine promises to us. Faith, in the regenerate state only, is therefore, comparatively feeble, unsteady, and frequently the result of special exertions, arising from emergencies. But, in its higher, clearer, fuller, exercise, it "works by love and purifies the heart." In the calm, self-examination, the deep searchings of heart, the painful convictions, the fearful struggles which generally precede the full realization of perfect love, this feebleness of faith, and the unreasonableness of human attempts to sit in judgment on the revelations of the infinite God, fully appear. The divine veracity rises into a clear, ascertained, unchangeable reality. When God says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you," the heart answers, It is true — it can be done — it surely will be done. When the baptism of the Holy Ghost descends, and the words of freshness and power are spoken to the inmost soul, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," it responds, It does—it now cleanseth me from all sin. What before had been a promise, an assurance for realization in some distant future day, assumes the verity of a present, occurring, existing fact; so bold and commanding is triumphing faith; and the clear testimony of the witnessing spirit attests the entire completion of the work.

Faith is henceforth, full, unwavering confidence in God's word, in each and all his holy promises — in the present, actual availing power of the Savior's blood, in the unerring wisdom and rectitude of God's plans and providences;—faith, triumphant in darkness and light, in

prosperity and adversity, in temptation and deliverance, in all states, and all conditions, inward and outward—faith that hangs upon God—that merges self in Deity—that makes Christ the sole and sufficient portion for this, and the life to come. We find this our "most holy faith" also, in the central idea of Christianity.

3. It includes the cleansing of the soul from all inward impurities. In the merely justified state, we are not entirely pure. The word of God, as we have seen, assumes it, in making arrangements to cleanse from all unrighteousness, those and only those, who are truly converted. We have inward convictions of remaining corruptions, corresponding with these inspired declarations. The conscience recognizes the stain. We feel the struggle arising from unholy elements, "roots of bitterness springing up trouble us." Hence, our weakness in Christian effort, our inefficiency as laborers in God's vineyard; our oft-repeated failures in representing the true spirit of Christianity, and those outward vascillations and sins into which we are suddenly betrayed. But, in the work of entire sanctification, these impurities are all washed away, so that we are wholly saved from sin, from its inward pollution. This is well taught in the numerous Scriptures, which present the idea of cleansing, as in the use of water for the garments or bodies, and blood for the soul. Of the latter, take a single and sufficient instance. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Those who have realized this cleansing, no longer "sow to the flesh." The enemy called "the flesh" is destroyed, and when, henceforth, they are attacked by the devil and the world, they are all on the Lord's side.

This is what we mean by "a clean heart," by being "pure in heart."

4. It includes a perfection in practical, outward Christianity, not possible in the merely justified state. Perfect love gives paramount power to the will of God. He who is wholly saved from sin, in every case of duty exclaims, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." There is, hence, perfect harmony between inward feeling and choice, and outward labor for the glory of God;—no reluctance in meeting Christian obligations—a prompt and cheerful obedience to every known command of the Savior. The wholly sanctified needs no urging, not even by himself, to read the Holy Bible, for it brings to him revelations of divine love and power, with which his soul is charmed;—needs no urging to secret prayer, for direct communion with God is his life—his soul's delight;—needs no urging to appropriate means to the demands of the church and the world, for his property is all the Lord's, and he is simply the Lord's steward;—needs no urging to work for his Master, for with transparent sincerity he may say, "I delight to do thy will, O God." Crosses, sufferings, toils in his Master's vineyard, all deepen his sense of obligation and increase his gratitude. Happy to suffer reproach, to make sacrifices, and to bear burdens for the honor of Christ, he exclaims, with the apostle, "Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." On earth a pilgrim, with his home in heaven, he has but one thing to do, simply to glorify God in his body and spirit, which are his. Life's distractions and cares are all reduced to order, under the

amazing simplicity and power of a single aim,—a pure, a lofty purpose, to please his Maker.

The past has no power to annoy, for that is all atoned by the blood applied, of his suffering Savior. The future has no power to raise an anxious thought, for that is not his—it is simply and wholly God's. The present is all secure,—entirely lost and swallowed up in God. Oh, happy state!—who would not give up all to gain it? Alas! what folly to be satisfied with first and limited attainments, when experience so sweet, so rich and full, awaits our command! What infinite loss we suffer, by remaining babes in Christ, "children tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine!" What wonder that, with our eyes once turned toward this glorious treasure, we exclaim:

"My soul breaks out in strong desire,
The perfect bliss to prove;
My longing heart is all on fire,
To be dissolved in love."

O, could we only know how near it is—how simple the act of faith which would realize it, we would not, could not, delay;—we should grasp the sacred prize, and "stand complete in all the will of God."

With one important consideration we are forcibly struck. There is no need of debate upon this fundamental doctrine, among evangelical Christians. Who can deny that a much higher standard of piety is proposed in the Scriptures, than that which is generally reached? And if it be limited by the capabilities of fallen human nature, and hence, not divine, or angelic, or legal, or inconsistent with future growth, but exactly

adapted to promote it, who will say it is impracticable? And when it is exhibited as the fullest earthly realization of the religion of love, who can fail to be charmed with it? Who, of any evangelical denomination, cannot, in honest sincerity, say, perfect love, entire consecration, faith without unbelief, purity from inward sin, and a loving, prompt and cheerful obedience to the will of God, must be right—must be my imperative duty—my blood-bought privilege, and henceforth I will not rest until I reach the exalted state? Thank God, we may all meet here, and know for ourselves what is that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord."

SEC. III. DIFFICULTIES CONSIDERED.

The candid inquirer, feeling the pressure of theoretical and practical difficulties, may after all this ask, "What is that holiness, without which no man can see the Lord? What degree of it is essential? Is it that unmixed, indeficient purity, that will cause every feeling, expression, and act, neither to be wanting or wrong? I mean the deficiency or defect not attributable to the heart — to the fountain? Is the preparation for heaven nothing less than perfect holiness — the inward foes not only conquered but slain, exterminated?

Will not those merely regenerated, having commenced to live, though the purpose of that life be not fulfilled here, live in heaven? Infants dying have not obtained that for which their existence was a means; will they not hereafter?

The dying thief — the regenerated dying suddenly

(many do so die) — Christians in times of rejoicing, testifying to their hopes of heaven, believing, should they die, they would be with Jesus, and yet who living, exhibited not the fruits of entire sanctification; — have these had a preparation for heaven? Many Christians too die, of whom we have all hope, yet had they recovered we should not have expected the testimony and evidence of sanctification.

What shall we say then? that entire holiness, such as we define it to be, is essential to the happiness of heaven and to admittance there? What will be done with such cases? If we assert that "God will cut short the work in righteousness," that is leaving it to the sovereignty of God. If to that we refer one case, then, why not all? Sanctification then will be something that God does to the regenerated, which is in no wise referable to their act, but to their character just as heaven is bestowed.

What is the truth in reference to these points? My mind is, and ever has been clear in regarding holiness as the great design of God in reference to us — the sole purpose of the gospel. That to embrace this design, labor for the accomplishment of it in us, is what our interest demands of us. That to set this before the world, and by all persuasions to induce them to seek, labor, and fight for it, is the special province of the ministry, I as heartily believe. But will the germ perish if the fruit be not matured? Is it only the ripened fruit that will be garnered? What will become of that for which the season has been too short?"

To this we reply: — We have already seen that there are two kinds of perfection — one in character, another in development. The first, applied to the body, means

health; the second, full growth. Applied to the intellect, the first means soundness, completeness; the second would mean the highest attainable strength, power, scope, accuracy. Applied to the moral nature, the first means "pure in heart," "cleansed from all sin," that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord;" the second would mean such extent and finish of the sanctified powers, as that they can no more "grow in grace." Applied to the Christian graces, the first implies that they are unmixed; "perfect love" without "fear;" the second would mean that these graces are incapable of further increase.

Now, perfection, in the second sense (of development) is a physical law purely. We do not predicate it of the intellect. We cannot of the moral powers, and certainly not of the Christian graces. Upon the contrary, we have shown that the law of progress is imperatively binding upon all Christians; that imperfections in character, in the moral condition, in the state of the Christian graces, are the great hindrances to progress; and that it is only in proportion as they are removed that development becomes possible and certain. Whatever may have been the development, (and there will doubtless be found every variety) previous to death, it must then go on in increased ratio for ever, such is the law of mind, and such are the intimations of the Scriptures. Whatever, therefore, may be lacking in growth for which "the season is too short," is thus amply provided for. Even "the germ," if it be a true one, a "plant which my heavenly Father hath planted," may, as we suppose, be transplanted to a heavenly soil by the same hand, and flourish in perpetual vigor.

But perfection in character must be secured in this life. The Christian, to be ready at any given time to enter heaven, must be sanctified not merely in part, but "wholly." He must be "cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." He must be made actually "holy," "cleansed from all unrighteousness," must be really "pure in heart."

To take any other ground, would be to remove probation into another world, or to make the final preparation "depend upon the sovereignty of God," neither of which is the doctrine of revelation. It might indeed be said that sin (in some modified form) and holiness are to co-exist in heaven for ever, but not by any concerned in this argument. So much then, we may consider settled, beyond the reach of a doubt, that the sinner must be cleansed from sin; in other words, wholly sanctified; in still other, be made perfect in love; or yet other, be constituted (in nature) a completed, finished, total Christian, with no corruption, sin, or depravity remaining, before he can enter heaven. This being secured, he may be in any stage of development, either as to the real, or relative strength, or scope of the moral nature sanctified, or as to the strength or scope of the perfected Christian graces.

The question as to when this complete work occurs, is, as we have seen, a question of fact. In the nature of the case, regeneration is not it. By the assumptions and requirements of the Bible, and by experience, it is settled that its commencement is simultaneous with regeneration, or the new birth; and with equal clearness, that it is not completed at that time.

The matter then stands thus: entire deliverance from

sin is necessary to enter heaven. This does not take place at the time of regeneration, therefore those who are saved, must be fully sanctified, some time between the period of regeneration and that of entering heaven, or of death. Regeneration is not therefore of itself a preparation for heaven—imperfect sanctification is not.

But the problem now arises, what is the fate of the truly converted man who dies without giving any evidence of entire sanctification? We answer, the fact may exist without evidence to us of its existence. In such case, the completion of the work being known to God would be sufficient. This reduces the problem to its severest form. If the truly converted man die actually unsanctified, (with remaining sin, or corruption, or depravity in his heart,) what will be his fate? we answer, we believe no such fact can exist, and for the following reasons:—

1. It supposes antagonism in God; pronouncing a sinner pardoned and condemned at the same time, which he does not do, in this life, though the sinner is known to be justified and not wholly sanctified.

2. It supposes, what cannot be true, that when the pardoned sinner has so lived and believed up to a given moment, as to secure the divine approbation, God will remove him from the trial state, and give him no further chance to secure a completion of the work.

3. The continuance of the justified state implies obedience in intention to all the requirements of the gospel; the law of progress, ("grow in grace,") and the law of purity, ("be ye holy,") included. In all such, there is more or less of panting for holiness, of praying for it—of abhorring and turning away from the least

remains of inward sin, and more or less receiving of the sanctifying power, through daily faith in the blood that cleanseth. The truly justified are therefore constantly approaching the glorious deliverance, which will present them without spot before the Throne. There hence arises a strong probability that many reach the state of entire sanctification, without the knowledge of others; and, for the want of well-defined views, or the precise style of faith that secures a witness to that special work, it may not be known, (as entire sanctification,) even to themselves. Such may have a general witness, which is inclusive of this, that their hearts are right with God,—that they are ready to die, and believe that, if they were to die just as they are, God would receive them to heaven. And they would, doubtless, be safe, (not by being excused for inward impurity, nor being permitted to carry any part of it into heaven but,) inasmuch as they have the blessing of purity, though not theoretically understood or recognized.

4. We suppose that to voluntarily omit holiness, in desire, in prayer, in the strivings of the heart, would be disobedience, and hence real apostasy. This explains the backslidings of so many in the church. They do not "hunger and thirst after righteousness," "grow in grace," "deny themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts;" do not bear the fruits of justification. All this may or may not be known to others. The law of such cases is however clearly revealed by the Savior. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away." "Every branch," however, "which beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." Individuals who thus neglect the required growth, and

the cleansing blood, whatever might be their expectations, if they should die in such condition, would assuredly be lost, not in a justified, but in a backslidden state.

For these reasons, we do not think any die in a justified state, but with the remains of carnal nature; or, in any sense, unsanctified.

This, as the reader will see, answers the question by destroying it.

But to take another view of the subject. There is no doubt with regard to those who are really perfect in love; both those who give evidence to us of the fact, and those who do not. They are delivered from all sin, and hence fitted, though certainly not more than fitted, for heaven.

There is no doubt with regard to those who, by disobeying the law of progress, or for any other reason, have lost their justification, whether the fact is known to us, or not. They, dying in that state, are certainly lost.

The only question, then, relates to those who, by supposition prior to death, belong to neither of these two classes. Now with respect to the fact, we are without data for direct conclusion, but we may argue indirectly as follows:—

Either God sends them to hell, being justified, or he takes them to heaven, being unsanctified, (morally impure,) or he arbitrarily cleanses them, before he takes them away; or, we must assume, that he sees in them the real fulfilment of the necessary conditions of sanctification, and therefore cleanses them, upon the true terms of the gospel, at some moment in life — the occurrence

of those conditions being unknown to us, or seeming improbable, having no tendency whatever to prove their non-existence.

Now the first, second, and third suppositions, no man can substantiate, either from Scripture or reason, and not only must the last follow in consequence, but it contains within itself the highest probability.

The conclusion from the whole discussion, then, must be this. God will permit nothing unholy to enter heaven. He has no two sets of conditions for believers. All the saved are entirely cleansed from sin in this life, through faith in Christ; the only obscurity in the system being, that the time and manner of bringing the conditions into exercise, may be, in many instances, concealed from short-sighted, ignorant man.

Let, then, the candid inquirer be answered specifically thus:

"What is that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord?"—Being cleansed from all sin, perfect in love. "What degree of it is the essential?"—No degree but the first. The work finished as to its character, whenever or however accomplished. "Is it that unmixed, indeficient purity that will cause every feeling — expression — and act neither to be wanting or wrong?"—Unmixed in character, though from the effects of sin upon the intellectual, the moral, and physical powers, its manifestations will not be absolutely perfect. Judged by the stern, unalterable law of God, without the atonement, there can be no state here, as we have shown, in which "unmixed, indeficient purity will cause every feeling, expression, and act to be neither wanting nor wrong,"—but with that complete depen-

dence upon the merits of Christ which characterizes the soul wholly sanctified, "every feeling, expression, and act," is acceptable to God. "Is the preparation for heaven nothing less than perfect holiness — the inward foes not only conquered, but slain and exterminated?" We understand it so, — perfect in character, not in development. No foes of God or man, however conquered, can enter heaven. "Will not those merely regenerated, having commenced the life of faith, though the purposes of that life be not fulfilled here, live in heaven?" — If they do not backslide, or, (which we conceive to be the same thing,) if they, some time during probation, "go on to perfection," not of development, but of character. "The dying thief — the regenerated dying suddenly. — Christians, in times of rejoicing, testifying to their hopes of heaven — believing, should they die, they would be with Jesus, and yet who living exhibit not the fruits of entire sanctification, have these a preparation for heaven?" If, at any time, their souls were pure, they were prepared. The fact assumed, that living, they exhibit not the fruits of entire sanctification, originates doubts as to their having so recently been in that state. They were either mistaken, or have relapsed, to some extent. "Many Christians, too, die, of whom we have all hope, yet, had they recovered, we should not have expected the testimony and evidence of sanctification." — It should be expected that souls who have really gone to heaven, would be pure if they were here in the same state in which they entered heaven. But the frailty of poor human nature is such, that many, who have gone safely, might have immediately relapsed, and had sore

battles with themselves, afterwards, had they recovered. "What shall we say, then, that entire holiness, such as we define it to be, is essential to the happiness of heaven, and to admittance there?" We dare not answer otherwise, (meaning perfect purity in moral character, perfect love which casteth out fear.) "What will be done with such cases? If we assert that 'God will cut short the work in righteousness'—that is leaving it to the sovereignty of God. If to that we refer one case, then why not all? Sanctification, then, will be something that God does to the regenerated, which is in no wise referable to their act, but to their character, just as heaven is bestowed." Even character need not be taken into the account, if it be an act of mere sovereignty. But completing the work of sanctification in view of something which God discovers in the condition of a soul, which has so believed and progressed, as to preserve a justified state to the close of probation, would be both supposable and probable, as, to have retained this state, to the end of probation, must have included the essential conditions of sanctification. The "act" of a free mind is thus not considered as distinct from character, but a part of it. "Will the germ perish if the fruit be not matured? Is it only the ripened fruit that will be garnered?" If the germ perish, it must be in this life, and this is apostasy. It is then the branch in Christ that beareth not fruit, and "he taketh it away." If it perish not, it is the branch that beareth fruit, and then "he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." None but fruit ripened as to its character is garnered—the figure suggests this. But the word ripe may be, and frequently is used with

reference to development, and then all stages of ripeness will be found in the garner of the Lord. "What will become of that for which the season has been too short?" No season will have been too short for possible completeness of the work of grace, (in character.) Though, in the cases of thousands, it is too short for probable completeness. God, for gracious reasons, lengthens it out for most of us, and, for reasons known to himself, he sometimes makes it fearfully short.

Three practical remarks, of great importance, are obviously suggested by this view.

1. It affords strong encouragement to justified Christians. It shows them that their continued justification includes the assurance of entire sanctification. That it is a part of the great plan of the Almighty, to perfect the work already begun, and that in their present state are included decided tendencies to this final result, and hence, strong probabilities of it. They are thus taught the value of their conversion, and furnished with the strongest inducements to press forward, to the glorious consummation of the work commenced.

2. It is a most salutary caution. If Christians become satisfied with a justified state, they will make no efforts to be saved from inbred sin. Then it will increase, — lead to actual sin — to apostasy. If they make the assurance that justification includes, the reason for not advancing to its realization, they defeat the assurance, — they forfeit it — they commit the sin of ingratitude — of presumption. Look at the import of the act. "I shall have it, therefore I am not anxious! I shall have it, therefore I do not desire it! I shall have it, therefore I do not intend to pray for it — to

labor for it — to believe for it!" Alas! this is the rock on which thousands have split. Upon the contrary, the argument ought to be, — "God has done a great work for me. It is a pledge that he will do more. He has commenced the purification of my heart. It is an evidence that he intends to complete it. The glorious fulness is in view. If faithful to the grace already given, — if my faith is a little stronger, I shall soon grasp the prize." In this way, the design of justification, and the commencement of sanctification, will be realized. In the opposite, it will be defeated as it has been in thousands of instances.

3. The duty of ministers is plain; to set the whole work of grace upon the heart, constantly and plainly before the people;—to give due prominence to the work of conversion, including as it does, justification, regeneration, adoption, the beginnings of sanctification, and the assurance of its completion;—to exhibit, with great fidelity and power, the imperative obligations of the law of progress, and the law of purity, showing the inevitable apostasy which results from neglect of these laws — and to hold out, with the clearness of light, to the Israel of God, everywhere, the glorious privilege of perfect love; and urge it, not as all the gospel, but the grand result sought in the gospel;—not merely as a privilege and a probability, but as a duty, — as an attainment which we are in danger of missing, and which is indispensable to our ultimate preservation in the favor of God, and our introduction to heaven. And especially should it be insisted, that our usefulness, our power as practical Christians, depends, to a great extent, upon an early reception of this gracious baptism.

CHAPTER III.

THE CENTRAL IDEA NEGLECTED.

SEC. I. THE FACT SHOWN;

FIRST, IN THE CONDITION OF INDIVIDUALS.

We believe that Christians, generally, are sanctified but in part.

1. We remark that the probabilities are not against, but in favor of this position. Let it, however, be distinctly understood, that we speak not now of unconverted persons or apostates in the church. There are, doubtless, many of these. But we refer to those who are truly Christians, in the sense of actual inward experience. And, first of all, let no one assume that we undervalue the converted state. Pause for a while over those who can honestly say, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." What reasons have they for gratitude!

Their sins are pardoned, and they were very numerous, and very great. The inward corruptions of a fallen nature were long voluntarily retained. Thoughts of depraved action were fondly cherished. Desires that would shrink from the light of day; motives that were "earthly, sensual, devilish," were freely encouraged.

Duties, the most sacred were neglected, and laws pure as the nature of God profanely trampled under foot! And yet, these Heaven-daring offences were all forgiven! God saw the deep and genuine sorrow of their hearts; their grief for having violated his holy law; their renunciation of sin; their rising, trembling, confident faith; their living, personal trust in the merits of a Redeemer; and he freely forgave all! What amazing condescension! The very Being whom they had so unjustly offended, without one meritorious act upon their part; without one redeeming element of character; in the pure, unbounded love of his nature; for Christ's sake, did "abundantly pardon;" so that they could triumphantly say, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." This was mercy — free, boundless mercy. It was efficacy in the blood of the Son of God. What a glorious privilege—saved from the guilt of the past! After all this unworthiness; this strange obstinacy; this stubborn denial of the right of God to reign; this rebellion against the only faultless government in the universe; after all this, to be freely absolved, so that no impending curse lowers over their heads; no sounds of wrath fill their souls with terror. No wonder that "joy unspeakable and full of glory" swells the heart, speaks from the eye, and quivers upon the lip, while angels chant anew the song which trembled upon the air of Bethlehem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

But more than this: they are regenerated—"born again"—"born of God," for in this expressive language do the Scriptures represent the change wrought in the converted by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The leading idea of this great work is reproduction; not of the constitutional elements of the soul, for, though these have been marred and perverted in various ways, they still retain their essential identity, and are unquestionably indestructible. It is a reproduction of life—life which originally existed in man, but which had become extinct by violence; spiritual life, depending upon union with God—a union interrupted by sin; hence the soul was "dead in trespasses and sins." No mode of restoring this life could be possible, but that which should unite the soul with God. Christ became the bond of union. He became our "daysman"—our intercessor. "He took his seat at the right hand of the majesty on high," where "he ever liveth to make intercession for" us. Converted men, by faith, have accepted his mediation, and appropriated the merits of his death, and thus, through him, the elements of a new spiritual life have been imparted to the soul.

But we think some err very much in regarding this work as a literal creation; and this leads them to inquire whether a holy God can permit imperfection to inhere in this "new creation." Others are, perhaps, more spiritual in a similar conception. They think of it as an organic "change of heart," and say, it must indeed be total. Such a conversion of the soul, undertaken and effected by such a power, must, it is assumed, leave it perfectly holy.

But, let us lead you to the contemplation of this gracious work from another direction. We would humbly ask you to take God's favorite language for its expression: "born again;" "born of God;" "born from above;" "sons of God;" "heirs of God."

Now conceive of a soul morally dead. Suppose that soul, with its living intellect, to apprehend God; with its living sensibilities, to feel the impressions of his Holy Spirit; with its living will, to resolve upon the abandonment of sin; upon real, instant, saving faith in Christ. Suppose it done. Now that soul is united to the Father through Christ. Now life runs through, quickens, and pervades it. No new spiritual essence has taken the place of the old; nor is it changed from one kind of organic being to another. But it has received a living energy from God; a power that sets in motion the moral heart, and throws the life-current sweetly through the whole man. This is God in the soul. It is God the Father, the originating Life; it is God the Son, the atoning Life; it is God the Holy Ghost, the sanctifying, witnessing Life.

And what is more natural than that those thus "born of God" should be reckoned "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus?" "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou," (honored Christian,) "art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

Now, observe, we do not pretend thus to have explained the manner of the new birth. It is too wonderful for us. We cannot explain it. We cannot fathom the doings of the Infinite in the salvation of a soul. Not a step in all that grand process is fully

within the grasp of finite minds, though they were extended to the capacity of a seraph.

Nor do we mean that this is the only true idea of regeneration; nor claim that it is even the best one. We only mean that we are exceedingly pleased with it. It presents the glorious idea of spiritual life reproduced in an aspect to us highly illustrative, and surpassingly beautiful. It seems to us not only to be vindicated, but immediately suggested, by the very "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth;" and it must be safe to conceive of the life of God thus powerfully operating to produce a spiritual resurrection of the inner man.

We have shown that regeneration does not necessarily include entire sanctification. It implies neither a literal creation nor an organic change, but the reproduction of life. Then whether or not the soul is made perfect in holiness and love, at the time the divine energy restores it to life, is wholly a question of fact.

It is evident, also, that in this great work is the commencement of sanctification. The very life which is infused into the soul, is a pure life, and hence, of necessity, a purifying life. It is a divine life, and thus an active, holy energy, working against sin, and in favor of holiness. It is God entering the soul, to make it his home. What else could be expected, than that the glorious work of purification should commence at the very instant the divine entrance is effected? Moreover, the regenerated man is conscious of the inward operation of this cleansing power, and the witness of it is included in the witness that he is "born of God." Indeed, so wonderful is the change produced by the first throbs of this divine life, that it is neither strange nor uncommon

for the young convert to suppose that his inward corruptions are totally destroyed. And even when his maturer experience corrects the error, he feels a sense of purity in his motives that he never felt before the great change; a horror of sin, of his own remaining sin, which shows unequivocally that the purifying process has powerfully commenced; and the same testimony is borne by his life.

We cannot over-estimate the value of this great work. What a work of love — of love divine — is this surprising transformation! The soul of man alive from the dead, with a clear apprehension of its heirship to glory, unending as the being of God! The fruits of the Spirit new-born within, love gracefully leading the heavenly train! Its appetites changed from earthly to spiritual! Its aims elevated from a world of sin and death to a world of God-like purity, love, and immortality! And all this without claim—without merit; nay, in despite of a life of ingratitude, a life of rebellion, which were enough to have vindicated forever his eternity of woe! All for the sake of Christ alone! Well might the soul, thus raised from the dead, exclaim,—

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And, when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, or thought, or being, lasts,
Or immortality endures!"

But we return to the position that Christians generally are sanctified only in part. We trust we have removed one principal difficulty out of the way of the truth. And

we may now glance at another. Many forget that inspired, like other writers, discuss truth generically and specifically. When it is their design to represent inward religion as a whole, they say, for instance, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and, behold, all things are become new." But then, "perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; he that feareth is not made perfect in love," is a specific discussion, due in this place, and not in the other. And so of churches. In the Apostle's address to the Corinthians, he assumes their prevailing characteristics, and hence writes, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye came behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," &c.

It would thus seem that everything was right in the Corinthian church; but look further on, where the discriminating analysis begins, and you find "It hath been declared unto me that there are contentions among you,"—"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ,"—"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,"—"Now then there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another."

But this in no wise contradicts the commendatory introduction. It is a specific discussion of facts reserved for this place. So the converted state is sometimes discussed without analysis, but at the proper time just discrimination is adopted. He who would study the Scriptures safely, must consult the scope of the particular discussion, to ascertain whether it is the design of the inspired writer to show what is the essential religious state, or what the highest, or what are its various stages. Neglect of this obviously important method, has led to grave differences of opinion, some maintaining that the lowest actual religious condition includes entire sanctification, and quoting general texts in proof of their position; others insisting upon the opposite, and very properly quoting specific texts to sustain their views.

Another source of error is in opinions entertained of depravity. Those who reject the commonly received doctrine in relation to "sin in believers," object to the terms corruption, carnal nature, inward defilement, and the like, as too physical, affirming that nothing evil can be predicated of spirit but predisposing tendencies. The error here, is in attempting to show in what depravity consists. This is an inquiry prohibited by the laws of our being. Surely, if we cannot know what spirit is, we cannot know the manner of its depravity. Our terms are physical, because we have no others that are more appropriate. There is, however, no more necessity for mistaking the force of the words corruption and defilement, than of the terms expressing the work they require; as washing, cleansing, and others. Should any assert that there is no remaining depravity in the heart of a believer, because we cannot tell what it is, the

answer would be, we can with no more accuracy tell what is depravity in an unbeliever. As well might we say, "the evil man" has no "evil treasure" in "his heart," because we cannot tell what it is. The fact of depravity is evident, and we are bound to infer moral condition from moral phenomena, as we infer intellectual powers from intellectual phenomena.

But it is still insisted that the holy and omnipotent God would not, could not indeed, do a work imperfectly —that, from the very nature of the case, the new creation must be instantaneous, and entire. We beg, however, to suggest, that this is so far from being necessarily true, that it is not at all sustained by the analogy of the divine proceedings. Progress in duration from the point of beginning to that of completion, is the law of Jehovah's works. He might undoubtedly have created the world in an instant, but he saw proper to begin it, and then go on through a period of "six days," to the consummation of his plans. He might have effected the redemption of man, by the atonement of Christ, instantly after the fall, but he saw proper to begin the work, and move on through a space of more than four thousand years in its progress. He might give us perfected vegetation, and harvest, instantly after the deposition of the seed; but naturally, as well as spiritually, he has preferred the progressive order, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." He might have given to earth, a "kingdom of heaven" that would be illustrated by the "leavened bread," but he preferred to give one which "is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." So he might have preferred and

efficiently secured, invariably, a finished sanctification at the moment of conversion, but he has chosen to begin the work, and make its completion depend upon faithfulness to the grace already given. He might have preferred a conversion which would have superseded the first part of the apostolic prayer, and rendered only the latter, "I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless," at all proper; but he chose to make the completion of sanctification contingent, and hence inspired the prayer, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." The whole probability then is in favor of a progressive, but instantly concluded sanctification. Not only, therefore, is it unlikely that Christians generally have been entirely sanctified, at the moment of conversion, but it is extremely probable that they have quite unnecessarily delayed the fulfilment of its scriptural conditions.

2. We may argue from the facts evident to consciousness and observation. Experience, as we have felt bound to claim, is generally, if not invariably, in favor of the position, that sanctification is at first but partial. It is true, as we have seen, that such is the power of the change from death to life, in conversion, that most who are subjects of it, think the work of cleansing entirely finished; or rather, their attention is so wholly absorbed in the happiness of pardon and adoption, that they do not give calm consideration to this great question. Hence they are often greatly surprised, when they feel the first movements of an unsanctified nature. A strong, worldly attraction, perhaps, or a sudden assault of the devil, rouses their inward conquered enemy, called "the flesh," which now struggles for the

mastery. Bitter disappointment and deep discouragement not unfrequently follow this unexpected disclosure. Some, indeed, conclude instantly, that they were never converted, and fall into hopeless despair, or rush madly into sin. But others, better instructed, resist manfully. They feel pain, but no guilt; and frequently they have a strong sense of the divine presence graciously assisting in the struggle. They fly to Christ, and are conquerors, "yea, more than conquerors, through him that loved us." When again they feel the risings of carnal nature, if they have been faithful, they are better prepared, and hence more speedily conquer.

Now we are not at liberty to consider these converts backsliders, because they have their conflicts with themselves; for they have experienced no alienation of affections from the Savior, no change of their gracious purpose to serve and glorify him. Indeed, nothing grieves them so much as the thought of offending him. They resist "the flesh" heroically, as they do the world and the devil. They grieve over these evidences of remaining depravity, and in earnest prayer cry out to God for deliverance. Yea; they obtain it, and go from the closet or the prayer-meeting, exulting in the hope of the glory of God. A backslider does none of these things. He yields when our true soldier of Christ fights. He is a captive in chains, where our Christian hero is a victor. The witness of the Spirit is not lost in the struggle of the successful combatant. We hazard nothing in asserting that true Christians may, and often do know, that they have the remains of carnal nature within them, while, at the same time, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with their spirits that they are the

children of God." The more they improve in religious experience, until wholly sanctified, the more they see of the evils of their own hearts. Their tendency to sin is not so great, because they are living nearer to God; but they know more of it. Their spiritual vision is constantly becoming clearer, and hence, they detect depravity in their own souls, which was before unknown to them. Is not this incontestably so? Who are they, who have the deepest sense of their inward corruptions? Who groan most earnestly for deliverance? Who have most of mental agony upon the discovery of their unlikeness to Christ? Certainly, not those who have "departed from the faith"; not those who seldom pray in earnest — whose lives are yielded a sacrifice to the world. No; they are surely those who live nearest to God in a justified state; who are most constant and devout in the use of the means of grace; whose conduct before the world is most exemplary. The discovery of this inward impurity, and these efforts to be freed from it, are not therefore evidences of apostasy, but rather of growth in grace, for which the converted have reason to be devoutly thankful.

3. But let us next inquire, what are the professions of the great mass of Christians? They profess religion: they profess faith in Christ: they profess a sense of pardon, of gracious acceptance, of adoption into the family of God; but do they profess to have received in themselves the answer to the prayer of the great apostle: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly?" Do they say, "The blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin?" No, they cannot, they dare not say it; for they feel the impurities of their nature rising too

fearfully within them. They too sensibly feel the dreadful exertions of the strong man bound, struggling for freedom and the mastery. Do they profess to have received the blessing of "perfect love?" No, they may not do it, for they have read expressly, that "perfect love casteth out fear. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." And they do fear, seriously fear, that they shall be conquered by their spiritual foes, and go to hell at last.

Now, would this be so, if Christians generally were sanctified wholly? Would not so rich a grace deserve, and receive, an humble, faithful, and grateful acknowledgment? Would the declarations of our class and conference meetings be, as they now are, a sad tale of confessions, with so little holy triumph and joy? Grant that many of our testimonies are from backslidden members; (and to be honest, however humiliating, we must grant it;) if all who are Christians at all are wholly consecrated to God, with their souls bathed in the ocean of "perfect love," must not the words of their lips burn with holy joy as they declare what Christ hath done for them? Depend upon it, this almost universal reserve with which the regenerated speak of their religious state; this confession and lamentation on their own account, means something. It tells, in language not to be misunderstood, that there is a fearful sense in which "the carnal mind" yet remains. It shows, with incontestable clearness, that much of inward renovation is yet to be accomplished. Let once the fire of the Holy Ghost baptize the soul; let sin be utterly destroyed; let love, pure perfect love, fill the heart, and the testimony would be changed. What

meekness of spirit, what tenderness of affection, what strength of confidence, what boldness of faith, what spiritual, searching, holy power, would gush from the soul made pure by the blood of Christ! We are perfectly certain that the entire sanctification of the great mass of Christians would completely change the character of our social meetings; and, if this is true, then the present humiliating professions of the church are in evidence that its members generally are sanctified but in part.

4. There is a certain peculiarity in the prayers of the dovout, which deserves to be carefully studied. We observe that most good men, when they pray, beseech God with more or less earnestness to purify them, to cleanse them from sin, to make them holy. And this they do, not in a style of doubt as to whether they need such cleansing; not as though they were merely conscious of the natural infirmities of human beings, and therefore of a possibility that they may have unintentionally, and without their knowledge, received the stains of sin upon their wholly sanctified natures. This is by no means the general implication of that prayer which goes up often with agonizing earnestness, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Sin in the soul is felt as a dreadful reality. Its motions have been so frequent, its struggles so powerful, that there has been no mistaking its character, or its presence; and hence, frequently, the very first thing in the prayers of the regenerated is a plea for purification; and such is the power of this inward depravity, that it seems to stupefy the soul, and render the utmost exertion of its energies necessary to

a realization of its terrible evils, and the immense importance of entire deliverance from it. Hence it is that the very prayers offered to God, for an inward cleansing from sin, are often cold and ineffectual.

Good men all recognize this state of things in the church. The most devout ministers, as well as the best of the laity, make the burden of their cry, O Lord, sanctify thy people. O cleanse thy believing children! The Savior himself set the example, "Sanctify them through thy truth." It must be so. Christians generally are sanctified but in part. What reason this for the most earnest searchings of heart, and devout humiliation before God!

5. If the position we have taken be not true, then, we are driven to one of two painful conclusions; either the great mass of those who are supposed to be Christians are backsliders, or entire sanctification is a very low state of grace.

If we understand this perfected work in the ordinary sense of being "cleansed from all sin," as "the mind that was in Christ," or "perfect love," how exceedingly small the number who can claim it! And though we should, as we do, concede it to some who do not "bear witness of the light," the number would still be small; for almost all we know are so far from furnishing clear evidence of perfect holiness of heart and life, that they furnish abundant evidence to the contrary; and it must be admitted that, in general, the reason why it is not professed under proper circumstances, is, that brethren know they do not enjoy it. Let a searching examination be commenced by any one who doubts this, and we believe he will soon be perfectly convinced.

Small, indeed, is the number in whom the blessed image of God is perfectly restored; and are these all the Christians there are in the world? Are all the rest hypocrites? Surely, this cannot be. He who would thus, at a stroke, sweep away so large a proportion of the church of Christ, must have studied imperfectly both men and Revelation; and yet he who asserts that none are Christians at all, except those who are perfectly holy, certainly does this!

But let us look at the other alternative. Admit that the number of the wholly sanctified is considerable — that all who were once converted, and have not backslidden, are as pure in their souls as it is the aim of the Holy Ghost to make them; then, alas! where are we? These inward tendencies to sin must remain for life! The gospel makes provision to suppress, but not to remove them! Pride, anger, and lust, must arise whenever their excitants are brought to act upon the soul, and our best hopes can only extend to victory over them. Except as the number of converts shall increase no purer state of the true church can ever be expected than we now have! The world has, in believers as they now are, the holiest models of Christian character that it will ever behold!

Against both of these alternatives we enter our solemn protest. For all those who hate sin on its own account, but who are painfully convicted of inward corruptions, and devoutly aspiring after the complete image of God, we claim the evidences of justification, and hence, a valuable Christian character. In the strength of grace they resist, and conquer their inward propensities to evil. They pray with spiritual power, and are often

melted into tenderness and holy joy. They love the brethren. They impress the world more or less with the truthfulness of religion. In imitation of their Master, they "go about doing good." They humbly affirm the witness of the Spirit that they are "born of God." They "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." None of these things were ever true of them in their unconverted state. None of them could be possible if they were backslidden. We must not therefore throw them away. We must not rank them with wicked men in the road to hell. To do it, we must decide against the evidence of experience; against the whole force of observation; against the most solemn professions of the men themselves; against the word of God, which says, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;"—"If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;" "and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure;"—against the universal opinions of the primitive church; for, says Wesley, "I do not know that ever it [possible sin in believers] was controverted in the primitive church. Indeed, there was no room for disputing concerning it, as Christians were agreed; and, so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of ancient Christians, who have left us any thing in writing, declare, with one voice, that even believers in Christ, till they are 'strong in the Lord and in the power of his might,' have need to 'wrestle with flesh and blood,' with an evil nature,

as well as 'with principalities and powers.'" Indeed, the judgement we oppose, must be against fact itself. This must be extremely hard; and, we submit there is no earthly necessity for it. How happy, upon the contrary, should we be to know that there are many Christians besides those who are wholly sanctified!

But mark the acknowledged defects in the experience of the persons under consideration. Impurities yet remaining, show themselves in thoughts, in feelings, and desires, which ought never to be gratified. "The flesh warreth against the Spirit." It is an enemy—a known and powerful enemy—in alliance with the world and the devil, to ruin the soul. Or, in other words, it is a state of mind peculiarly susceptible of worldly impressions and allurement; a state which responds to the suggestions of the devil, and strongly tends to guilty compliance with temptation; and hence the war with self, which these disciples are compelled to keep up. Hence, also, the many "fears within," which harass them. Hence the darkness and doubts which distress them. Hence the weakness which they frequently feel in spiritual exercises—the reluctance against which they are often forced to do duty. Hence that liability to fluctuation in character, in enjoyment, in life, over which they have to mourn. Hence those humiliating confessions which they make from week to week, often with tears of contrition, in the presence of God and their brethren. Hence the struggle which is necessary in the closet, and in the prayer-meeting, to be blessed—the frequent groanings to be set free. That all these facts may co-exist with all the evidences of adoption given above, we know by experience; and from the

plain word of God, from the testimony of multitudes, and from the actual and relative developments of religion in the world.

But is this all of entire sanctification? Has the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost passed through us, done its work, and left all these impurities never to be removed? Is there no higher style of faith—no more permanent happiness—no more complete deadness to the world—no purer inner life—no holier living? Is the church, which we now see, leaving out irreligious members, the "peculiar people," for whom Christ gave himself that he might redeem them from all iniquity? And are they already so redeemed? "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Is the present state of Christians the realization of all that is included in this glorious revelation of the object for which the Savior died? No, God forbid. Let us not thus lower the standard of holiness. Some bright examples there are on record, and some still living, of entire sanctification, in distinction from the many who are sanctified but in part; some of "perfect love," in distinction from those whose love is, to the eye of God and men, evidently imperfect. And these are so many indications of what the whole church of Christ may be—of what it ought to be—of what it will be, when he shall have fully "sanctified and cleansed it," and when he shall "present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrin-

kle, or any such thing." Then, indeed, it shall "be holy, and without blemish." O, transporting thought! Such a destiny awaits the church of the Redeemer! And all that is "glorious in holiness," as the privilege of the militant church, is fairly within the reach of every member.

But we have a great practical end in view, in this attempt at true analysis, and an honest development of the state of believers. It is not to convince speculators upon this ancient and honorable faith of the Bible, and of the best forms of Christianity known in history, though we should rejoice to see the last doubt removed from every mind in the church. It is not even to convince the masses of sincere disciples, who are, in reality but partially sanctified,—for we cannot doubt that this fact is already known to them individually. No. But we wish to rouse the sensibilities of the church to the character of this truth.

If it be true, that Christians generally are sanctified but in part, can it be that we have no interest in such a state of things? Are we to know such a fact as this, and make no inquiries in relation to it? Have we no concern as to the results of the fact? None as to the reasons for it? Can we remain so seriously imperfect in our Christian state, year after year, and make no efforts to know whether a better character is possible to us—whether there is guilt in our negligence, whether there is danger to ourselves, danger to the church, danger to the world, in so long remaining "babes in Christ" when we ought to be mature men?

Verily, the mere suspicion that the mass of Christians are sanctified but in part, ought to rouse the spirit of

inquiry throughout the length and breadth of Zion; and the positive knowledge of the fact ought to enlist the sympathies, and engage the energies of the church, till we can say, in truth and holy triumph, Christians generally are sanctified wholly.

SECOND; THE FACT SHOWN IN THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" The reception of the Holy Ghost, in a special sense, is every believer's privilege. This is evident from the promises made. John said, "He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The special character of this baptism appears in the language of the Savior given by St. Luke: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Now "the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty;" and "they were all with one accord in one place;" "and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." It was hence evident that this special baptism was provided for the whole church. St. Peter confirmed this opinion. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Now this could not have been the only work of the Holy Spirit upon earth. He is the great agent of general grace, and must have been engaged in the ordinary work of enlightening, purifying, and saving men

since the first promise of redemption. But the Christian dispensation was to be marked by peculiar responsibilities, and hence, of course, by peculiar privileges. The full inauguration of the Messiah-King was therefore attested by the abundant outpouring of the Spirit, which was so special as to be announced and described as an original gift.

The instances recorded are ample confirmation of the general right of believers to this special baptism. We have room for but two: "Now, when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Consider also the brief history in Acts 19. 1–7. Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus, to whom he proposed the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" He supposed them to be true believers — regularly baptized Christians. From both these instances, and other similar ones, it is evident that, in primitive theology, a special baptism, in distinction from the ordinary work of the Spirit, was recognized as the believer's privilege. It was not implied in the rudiments of faith— in the first conditions of discipleship. It did not invariably accompany Christian adult baptism. It was received at times more or less remote from primary faith, and hence in different stages of Christian progress. It was given in answer to prayer, which, in the forms of primitive simplicity, was accompanied by the laying on of

hands. And, finally, it was sometimes followed by certain miraculous results, that were in accordance with the spirit and emergencies of those times, yet not essential to the promised blessing.

But, conclusively, the results required imply the special baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is not merely the conviction for sin, the repentance and faith, the regeneration and witness given in the ordinary forms of divine agency, that will impart completeness to the Christian character, that will clothe it "in the beauty of holiness," that will gird it with power to conquer the world; and yet these are results imperatively demanded in the revelation of God. The church is held responsible for a state of perfection, for a style of activity, and a degree of moral power, which must be utterly impracticable in the absence of this special baptism. It is evidently assumed in her predicted mission that she will have received the fulfilment of the promise which is to her and her children; and when Christians are found without their intended purity, development and efficiency, it may well be asked, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

It thus appears, from the promises recorded, the instances given, and the results required, that the reception of the Holy Ghost in some special sense, is every believer's privilege.

But how is this important apostolic question to be answered by the mass of believers at the present time? Perhaps few could reply, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Unquestionably, however, large numbers must answer in the negative. They have been truly converted, are recognized as

believers by the church and the world, and perhaps by the omniscient God. Still they are only "babes,"—weak in faith, and very inefficient. They have at no time felt the corruptions of their hearts, so as to make them cry out for deliverance. They have not bewailed their sinfulness for days and nights together, engaged in fervent, agonizing prayer, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, determined never to rest, until they could "reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." They have not felt the holy violence of faith, that knew no denial, and claimed, in present renovating power, the baptism of fire. They have not realized the dissolving energies of the Holy Ghost, pervading their whole being, and filling their souls with a burning desire for the glory of God. Or, if so, they have been unfaithful, and are now uttering their lamentations by the rivers of Babylon, with their harps hung upon the willows.

Though devoutly grateful for the special manifestations of saving grace, wherever they appear, the friends of Zion cannot fail to see, and mourn over, her low estate. Inefficiency is felt to so great an extent, as to excite alarm and anxious inquiry into its causes and remedies. The church question—involving the whole field of its essential and organic life, of its historic and prophetic relations to itself, to human governments, and to the ultimate destiny of the race—has no one aspect so intensely interesting as this: What is its essential want? With all deference to those who seek to solve this problem, in other modes, we believe that, The baptism of the Holy Ghost is the great present want of the church.

1. In proof of this position, we observe, that, The Vision of the church is obscure. From the modes of her being, and the nature of her mission, the church is required to examine with great accuracy the moral condition of the world. She must study profoundly her own state, and the wants and woes of those who are out of her pale. But she does not succeed well in these efforts. Thousands of her members cast a momentary glance at their own hearts, and are flattered by the view; seeing nothing but virtue, where pride, avarice, envy, lust and revenge, have their undisturbed habitation. The soul's reflection cannot reach these depths of concealed depravity. The light is insufficient. The road to heaven is a narrow way, but do not Christians generally think it exceedingly broad? The boundaries of the road, which to an accurate vision would be distinctly marked, seem quite undefined; and when they suppose themselves in the way to life, it is quite possible that they are in "the broad road that leadeth to destruction." There are dangers before them, but they cannot see them; dangers in their worldly prosperity, but they think it the best of fortune; dangers in their levity, but they think it merely innocent joy: dangers in their splendor of dress and equipage, but they think it only decency and good taste; dangers in their sumptuous entertainments and fashionable amusements, but they regard them as essential modes of social refinement. There are frightful dangers in the outward prosperity of the church; in her accumulating wealth and numbers; in her popular and secular power; but she takes these to be the true signs of progress, and ever and anon reaches out her grasping hand for more.

These are sad evidences of obscure vision. But there are others.

A work of vast moment is committed to the church; but how little of it does she see! A circle of a few miles bounds the vision of her greatest numbers. And even within that narrow circle, hundreds are perishing for lack of spiritual food; but they are not seen. The hours and the moments of wicked men all around these professed Christians, are made up of eventful crises on which eternal life and eternal death depend; but they come and pass, with their momentous issues, unnoticed!

Far off in the regions of idolatry, what deep and damning guilt preys upon the souls of men!—what agonies wring and crush the heart!—what fearful corruption rages!—what distressing doubts hang over the great unknown!—what countless myriads are moving off, in all the misery of unpardoned sin, every day, into the world of retribution! But all this is nothing to the church. She cannot see it. She has, it is true, an idea that there is something to be done in this direction; but, whatever it may be, she seems hardly aware that it requires haste; and hence she calculates, with cool and exact economy, how much she can spare towards it, from home demands and worldly gratification; proposing in all sincerity to send a few missionaries more, each year, into this vast field of the morally dead. What is it to the church that there are more than six hundred millions of deathless souls, unaware of the revelation God has made to man—of the Savior he has given them—of the immortality to which they are destined—of the bright glories of the heavenly world, and the deep horrors of an endless hell?

Now, no light of science that ever dawned upon the world can illuminate these "dark habitations of cruelty." No inquiry of human reason can ever reach the moral death that pervades the world. No natural eye can gaze into these depths of human misery. No merely natural philanthropy can ever explore these abodes of sin. Nor can any ordinary Christian sight penetrate this vast profound of darkness and woe.

But the special reception of the Holy Ghost is a baptism of light. He is God, and "God is light. In him is no darkness at all." It was to this Divine Spirit that we were indebted for the first view of our sinful hearts. It was his gracious light that revealed the cross, and that has led us every step we have taken in the way to heaven. But hitherto we have received this light in limited portions, just as God has seen to be suited to us, just as our faith has commanded. Hence this obscurity of vision. But "light is sown for the righteous." Provision is made to take all this obscurity away. The promised baptism of the Holy Ghost is a flood of light, penetrating the darkest recesses of the soul, revealing its most concealed corruption. Receiving this, the Christian, sanctified but in part, could not return from an examination of his heart, congratulating himself that there is so little sin there. Its very fountain of inbred corruption would be exposed, causing him to groan in anguish, to "abhor himself, and repent as in dust and ashes." But to the same mind this light would reveal more distinctly than ever its cause of gratitude for what the Lord had done—the evidence of his justification—the honor of sonship—the open "fountain in which to wash from sin and all uncleanness."

It is a clear light, reflected from the mind upon the word of God. It opens with astonishing brightness the promises of the gospel, and strongly illustrates the divine providences. It quickens the inquiring and active powers, and pushes investigation far out into the world of suffering humanity. It reveals with great distinctness the "high and holy way cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in." It discovers dangers that were never before realized. It shows the perilous track of a wandering church within the unhallowed precincts of sin. It compels the soul to shrink from and abhor the very things which before it has earnestly coveted. It trembles to see that the outward splendors of the church, once deemed the reliable evidences of success, are but the attire of a harlot, both revealing and inviting illicit intercourse with a godless world.

It is a baptism of light, uncovering the responsibilities of the church; the fearful power of sin over the hearts of men; the peril of neighbors and friends out of Christ; the delusions of errorists in the struggles of reason after truth to believe, a God to adore, a power to redeem. It more than manifests the fact that "the world lieth in wickedness," which may have been known before. But with this strong accession of light, the soul sees the danger of ignorance, the guilt of infidelity, the responsibility and power of a love of sin. It looks out upon the bewildered masses of humanity as they are moving off to perdition, and says, Alas! these are my brethren! I have a personal, living, eternal interest in them. I am responsible for them to the full extent of the moral power that resides in a converted soul, and lies within its reach. It exclaims in

agony, I am, O my God, I am my brother's keeper! And lo! he goes, uninstructed, unwarned, before my eyes, down to hell!

We have no room to extend the view. The argument stands thus: the special outpouring of the Holy Ghost is alone a baptism of light; the vision of the church is obscure; therefore the great present want of the church is a baptism of the Holy Ghost.

2. The life of the church is feeble. Christians have a life in common with the race, and they have a life other than that—a "life hid with Christ in God." It is given in regeneration, in the union established through Christ with the Fountain of life. It is hence characterized as a divine life—a life "begotten of the Father." It is a union of humanity with divinity—a life utterly new in all its attributes and functions. The soul which before gave out only the manifestations of death, now gives out those of life; which before was downward, hellward in its tendency, is now upward, heavenward.

It is, moreover, characterized as a life of faith, not merely a life of belief. This is the life of wicked men—the life of devils. It is a life of voluntary reliance upon the Savior. It is faith in the unseen, in the unknown, in the non-existent! Taking God at his word, the soul renounces all worship of visible, tangible being, in favor of an unseen, impalpable, spiritual essence. It renounces present gratification, in favor of that which is mainly future. It sets aside the glories of earth for the beatitudes of heaven, which can only exist for the individual, when they are realized. And all on the strength of a word.

Such is faith. But let it be strictly observed, it is a

life of faith, in distinction from any number of separate exercises or acts; in itself a living, God-inspired principle; giving perpetual life to the soul as well when asleep as awake; as well when intensely fixed upon a mathematical problem, as when engaged in prayer; a faith that lives in God, that receives all from God, that turns all to God.

It is also distinguished as a life of love; a life of holy delight in the character of God, and a true desire to promote his glory; of delight in the characters of Christians, and a desire to promote their prosperity; of delight in the essential qualities of the human soul, and a desire to save it; a delight in all goodness, and a desire to extend it; a living love, that is a divine reality, whether it glows in the fervor of a pure, intense passion, or rules as a fixed, commanding principle.

Now, such is the individual Christian life; such is the associated, organic Christian life; a divine and spiritual life; a life of faith, a life of love, with all their implied concomitants and results.

But in the same hearts it may vary in its strength and vigor, in proportion as its conditions are met. Especially does it depend upon the measure of divine influence received. And this is comparatively limited at first, though its smallest measure seems too much for the soul in its unworthiness to receive, in its feebleness to endure. But experience proves that these incipient gifts of the Holy Ghost are but the earnest of the baptism in reserve, and made to depend upon faithfulness to the grace already given.

As in individuals, so in the church. You shall find a collected, organized life, just in proportion to the indi-

vidual life of which it is composed. And it is this life of the church which we would accurately estimate.

The individual consciousness of the church, if it could be ascertained, would be decisive in this inquiry. We may certainly know something of this from ourselves; and let us ask, how does the interior life report itself? What is the vigor of that life which you profess to have, in distinction from the natural life; your divine life, wholly unlike any thing human or earthly; your life of faith, renouncing the tangible, the sensual, the present, for the spiritual, the rational, the future; your life of love, fixed on God—God in unchangeable triunity, God in doctrine, God in law, God in redemption, God in fellowship with man? In all candor, is not the inward witness of this life faint, and often inaudible to the spirit-ear?

Actions report correctly this individual consciousness. True, the work of an inward, spiritual life, may be seen at the present time, and it is seen. Many are the spiritual toils, the works of faith, the labors of love, that show a divine life in the church. But there are other works that do not subordinate to these; that are not merely diverting from the true employment of a living spirit; that are not merely accidental or occasional in their demands; works that are engrossing, and that shudder at the light!

Upon the whole, the phenomena of a deep, pervading, spiritual life in the church do not appear at this time. The facts, so far as we are able to judge, compel us to admit that it is comparatively feeble. The general impression, that it is so, cannot be mistaken; and it is distressing to see the expedients adopted, to stimulate

this fainting life, and revivify the church. To some it seems that long, loud, and censorious preaching will accomplish it; to others, that special revival measures are the remedy; to yet others, that a spirit of deeper, purer intelligence, diffused throughout the church, will secure the desired result; others still, think radical changes in the constitution and policy of the church are demanded; while not a few insist, that the hope of religion is in a more critical, liberal, and extended philosophy But sad experience proves that, under the strongest action of these, and a thousand other similar resources, the church may wither and die. She has use for an honest and faithful ministry, for special revival measures, for widely diffused intelligence, for improvements in the flexibility of ecclesiastical polity, for a sound philosophy. But it may be doubted whether she ever had more of these than now, and yet her life is drooping.

It is time to consider the fact that the Holy Ghost is eminently life-giving, as well as life-being. His special influence is alone a baptism of life. We have had it in a small degree. Individuals have felt it in its ordinary power and effect. Churches have enjoyed it in a limited measure. The whole church is sustained by its usual general grace; but all this is not enough. It is not what the Bible promises. It is not what the Savior purchased. It is not what the church of antiquity received. It is not what the church of the Reformation experienced. It is not what the church of former generations enjoyed in the days of Wesley and Asbury, of Edwards and Payson. We have too much forgotten this grand and effective provision for the

emergencies of the church—the very power which the omniscient God foresaw would be imperatively demanded in the church of the future. We have allowed our minds to be engrossed by subordinate instrumentalities, and just in the same proportion have approached the standard of the church of the Middle Ages. The Holy Spirit is clothed with omnipotence, for the very work we are struggling to accomplish, too much without him. Let the divine effusion come; let it fall as upon the day of Pentecost; let it baptize the whole church of the living God; let it penetrate the souls of ministers and official members, and run like fire through the masses, and then there will be life. This is, by way of eminence, a revival It is pouring the life of God through the souls of men, and wrapping the church in a flame.

Clearly enough, the special gift of the Holy Ghost is alone a baptism of life. The life of the church is feeble; therefore the great present want of the church is the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

3. The holiness of the church is defective. We have seen that the first great law of holiness is consecration. It is so because, in every act of divine grace efficiently successful, there must be the concurrence of the will. This fundamental principle is conceded in the revelation of God. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [a part for the whole] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It is an imperative duty, founded in the relations we sustain to God as creatures, and as probationers under a remedial dispensation. But we must do it. God will disturb our sin-

ful devotion to self, his great rival in man. He will awe us by his threatenings, and move us by his "mercies." He will send us the stimulating power and gracious aid of his Holy Spirit. But he will not yield for us. We must present ourselves as the sacrifice upon his holy altar. It is not till the first point is yielded — our voluntary attachment to sin — that he begins the work of sanctification. Nor can the work progress faster than the voluntary consecration proceeds. The full and final realization of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," must involve the free surrender of soul and body, with every power, known and unknown, of life and health, of attainments and reputation, of property and friends, to God for ever. The reservation of the least of these shows a will not yet perfectly subdued.

The second great law of holiness is faith, the "faith that works by love and purifies the heart."

Another is purity: the word implies it. All the terms used in Scripture to define and enforce holiness make this interpretation necessary. The divine arrangements are made to purify us. If the conditions are met, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" — an achievement so great, it would seem to us, as to be utterly impossible; but the infinite power and faithfulness of God are pledged.

The remaining law is completeness or perfection, not in development, for eternal progression is the rule of God's spiritual kingdom. We mean completeness in the character of the Christian graces especially. Impurities mingled with these render them imperfect in themselves, irregular in their exercise, and slow in growth. Take

love as the great, general grace, inclusive of all the rest. We quote once more: "Perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." Plainly, therefore, there is a Christian love that is less than perfect love; a love mingled with fear: and there is a "perfect love that casteth out fear." This is holiness; and surely it is not beyond the claims of God, or the power of redemption. It is only measuring up to the broad command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." This is the great principle and sum of obedience. Even outward obedience proceeding from imperfect love would be irregular, constrained, and deficient; but, proceeding from perfect love, in all the details of Christian duty it would be a holy pleasure. The will of God would be supreme. Love to God would be so intense and absorbing that it would not be needful to inquire whether his pleasure is uttered in the way of imperative command or otherwise. The slightest intimation that any act, however hard to perform, however crossing to human nature, would be, in any degree, pleasing to him, would move the whole soul to do it.

Such is holiness in its highest practicable realization. Of course there has been no time in which the church has fully measured up to this standard. It would be true of her in any age to say she is defective in holiness. As the purification of the heart is a progressive work, there will always be great variety in the holiness of the church. Nor do we now compare the church of the present with that of the past. Even granting it could

be proved that there is more holiness in the church now than at any former period, it might be more defective. For the light, the privileges, and the responsibilities of the church are constantly increasing. She may be defeated now under the same degree of moral power which in a former day would have rendered her triumphant. We seek to estimate her attainments by her present responsibilities.

And first, the holiness of the church is in proportion to the degree of her consecration. The grand test of consecration is humility. In the heart of an individual, the complete domination of pride is evidence that there is no consecration. Its partial ascendency shows the struggle between conflicting powers indecisive. But self-abasement reveals a consecrated soul. That which values itself does not surrender to God. And the same must be said of the church. Perfect humility alone would be the proof of her entire consecration.

Upon careful examination, we fear it will be found that her members, as individuals, have a high estimate of self, of its value and rights; that they habitually place themselves above their brethren, and, in some instances, even above the Almighty! Else how should it happen that they are so exacting in relation to the esteem of others; so sensitive in regard to reputation; so grasping in bargains; so aspiring as to official rank and posts of honor? How is it that so much power of body and mind is concentrated upon worldly schemes,—that so much property is claimed for self, and so little really rendered to the Lord, who rightfully claims the whole? Why is so much time engrossed with schemes for the aggrandizement of the individual, and so little recog-

nized as the Lord's? Why are kindred and friends held so closely? and, when God asserts his right by taking them to himself, why such immoderate grief, such rebellion against divine sovereignty? These claims, it must be remembered, are asserted against God, in defiance of his authority. Self is not humbled. It has not accepted its revealed insignificance, its nothingness. It has rejected it, denied it, and preferred its claims to high consideration by signs which none can mistake. The extent of this practical rebellion is alarming; and to the same extent is the evidence of defective consecration in the church. No talents, no property, no time is set apart to a sacred use, consecrated to God, which is reserved for the unauthorized use and disposal of self.

Nor can we make a higher claim for the church collectively. If her consecration were complete, she might show it by her humble views of herself; by her attentions to the poor; by her plainness and economy; by her liberal contributions for the spread of the gospel; but other and opposite facts and principles are exceedingly prevalent. Her separate denominations are characterized by elevated views of themselves. In the general, their arrangements and policy are not adapted to illustrate this distinguishing glory of the Christian dispensation,—"Unto the poor the gospel is preached." Artificial distinctions are daily indulged, that bring home to the poor the fact that they are poor, and to a greater or less extent prove that poverty is proscription. Plainness in churches, in establishments, is dreaded as an evil; and splendor is courted and adopted at the expense of credit, justice, and charity. Extravagant demands at home render foreign appropriations small and entirely

inadequate. Alas! how much of unsanctified self yet remains in the church! Defective consecration is marked and daily published to the world.

And what is the faith of the church? Works are the evidence of faith, and she does some important work for the world. But not the work demanded to renovate society, and save the millions who are dying without the Redeemer. Hers is a faith too easily baffled, not, as it should be, that which removes mountains.

Next, we must inquire into the purity of the church; not her purity in doctrines and ecclesiastical polity, but in heart. "The pure in heart" love holiness and hate sin. So strong and decisive are these principles, that their developments are visible. It is impossible to conceal them. The conversation, the company, the employment, will all reveal the inner condition. How are these in the church? The fact cannot be concealed that the purest services known on earth do not attract the multitude. The social prayer meeting, where the purer hearts seek direct communication with God, is generally small. The close and searching religious conference is thinly attended. The rooms of the sick and suffering, of "the widow and the fatherless," are frequented by but few. The holy communion is dreaded and neglected by multitudes. These are among the holiest scenes on earth. It must be cause of deepest sorrow that so few have the state of mind which renders them delightful; that there is so much impurity in the church, that the most trifling diversions will prevent great numbers from entering them; that attachments to them are so slight as to constitute almost no effective moral power, in competition with parties of pleasure or any species of fash-

ionable amusement. By these simple tests, this grand element of holiness is shown to be wanting to an alarming extent.

But, finally: The holiness of the church is in proportion to its completeness in the Christian graces, especially love; and obedience is the test of love. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Let us seize at once upon a few specific laws which distinguish the Christian system. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Alas! what a fearful amount of disobedience to this most solemn command there is in the church! Take another: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." And another: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Mark this law of progress. See with what authority we are called upward in the divine life. But disobedience defeats these splendid schemes of divine love. We do not love God further than we obey him. Our very feeble and imperfect obedience reveals a sad deficiency of love.

In all the great elements of holiness, then, the church is seriously defective. And the remedy — what is the remedy? is a question of the gravest importance. We have not been wanting in experiments. The common resort is reformation of life, attempted by thousands from deepest conviction of want, and in the utmost sincerity, but followed by the most lamentable failures. The reason is obvious. It is an effort to purify the streams while the fountain remains corrupt. Discipline is another mode of purifying the church. But the power

to execute it is insufficient; the subjects are too numerous; the light to discriminate them is too dim.

The reception of the Holy Ghost, is a baptism of holiness. He is, by way of eminence, the Holy Ghost, as the sanctifier of believers, as the great source and efficient agent of holiness in the church. He alone can give the light which reveals the necessity of purification. He alone can move the great deep of the heart to abhor sin, and pant for holiness. He alone can excite that abandonment of self, that complete reliance upon Christ, which consecration implies. His power can cleanse and renovate the soul; can fill it with "perfect love." This is making the tree good. It is thoroughly cleansing the fountain. And may it not be a general blessing? It is the church, the whole church, that needs this purification. Its worldly tendencies mar its distinctive character. Its corruptions cripple its energies. Its imperfections make it fearful, where the boldest courage is demanded.

The special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is alone a baptism of holiness; the holiness of the church is defective, therefore the great want of the church is a baptism of the Holy Ghost.

4. The power of the church is inadequate. Her power over herself is especially so. She needs control. She needs government with a strong hand. Made up of frail and sinful human nature, she reveals decided tendencies to the world, to self-gratification, to an abandonment of her first principles. She must, from some source, have power to check these tendencies, or she will cease to be the salt of the earth. To speak of them, to utter solemn and repeated warnings, to correct indi-

viduals here and there, will not suffice. There is needed a moral energy, that will move through the masses of the church, command their attention, and really arrest their downward career, fix their hearts and wills upon the great aim of probation, and secure a general spirited devotion to it.

Strong conservative power is constantly needed, or pure doctrines revealed from Heaven will be sacrificed to the pride of intellect, the rashness of speculation, or the neglect of indolence. Her morals, which glow with celestial light, will be trampled in the dust; her institutions, pure, simple and elevating, will deteriorate into unmeaning forms, and at length be wholly superseded by the inventions of men; her primitive government will be despised and abandoned, in favor of spiritual despotism or irresponsible anarchy. The power of a wholesome, vigorous discipline, must "mark the unruly," and separate from visible communion, such as will not be reformed, and are contaminating in their influence upon others.

The church, to accomplish her mission, must also be endowed with a strong and increasing aggressive power; a power that will be stronger than sin; that will not hesitate to attack it in high places; that will move forward her reforming agencies with steadiness and effect, into all lands, and against all resistance. She must have a social power, that will silently and unobtrusively permeate all classes, and all governments, subduing the fierce passions of men, arresting the career of ambition, and meliorating the condition of the race.

We have no hesitancy in claiming this moral power, to a greater or less extent, for the church in all ages.

But it is too feeble. A sad want of power is extensively felt at the present time. The marked defects of the church are partially seen, are acknowledged; but there seems to be little power to remedy them. Her dangers are deplored, but there is no power to avoid them. Radical tendencies and retrograde movements, are viewed by the few with deepest alarm; but they are breaking over every barrier, and moving on to destruction, with force apparently irresistible. The want of power in discipline is most lamentably evident. That there are many ungodly persons in the church, under whose baneful influence she mourns and labors, there can be no question. But what body of Christians feels that it has power to purge itself from this corruption? Efforts are frequently made, but they are seldom thorough. Few pastors can feel themselves sustained in a candid and impartial administration, that will remove all who dishonor the church, and are injured rather than benefited by the false assurances derived from her honorable protection and guaranty.

And how inefficient is our aggressive power! How bold and obtrusive, and even triumphant, is sin in our presence! How little power have we to reach those who are perishing around us! We see some of them. We lament their doom, but have no strength to avert it. We direct our arrows well, but there is not power enough in the arm to drive them to the heart. We have men to send into every heathen land beneath the sun, but we have not power to send them. The church abounds in wealth, but she cannot command it. Providence is throwing open a thousand doors to the great field of her future triumph, but she does not, cannot,

enter them. Alas! how feeble those energies which might be clothed with omnipotence!

It is in vain to grasp for secular power to supply this defect. History shows that this is weakness, rather than strength. It has been the bane of the church in all ages. Her true "weapons are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." The elements of her strength are not numbers, nor wealth, nor popular favor. The outpouring of the Spirit of God is alone a baptism of power. With this renovating influence, the church might gird herself for the conquest of the world. This, where it is full and general, takes away the cause of her weakness, stimulates with amazing energy every power of her being, and thrusts her out for the realization of her destiny. Under such a divine afflatus, the dead revive, the timid become courageous, the weak are nerved with supernatural strength, and the sacramental host of God's elect marches on to triumph and glory.

This, then, is the argument. The special outpouring of the divine Spirit is alone a baptism of power; the power of the church is inadequate; therefore the great want of the church is a baptism of the Holy Ghost.

In its combined strength it stands thus. Inasmuch as the vision of the church is obscure, the life of the church feeble, the holiness of the church deficient, and the power of the church inadequate; and as the special gift of the Holy Ghost, promised in the gospel, is alone a baptism of light, a baptism of life, a baptism of holiness, and a baptism of power, it follows conclusively that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the great present want of the church.

We have thus certainly found reasons for much careful reflection in examining the condition of individuals, and of the church. Surely nothing further is necessary to show the great central idea of Christianity neglected.

SEC. II. THE FACT ACCOUNTED FOR;

FIRST: NOT BY WANT OF TIME BUT OF ATTENTION.

We have seen that the central idea of Christianity is, to a very great extent, practically neglected, and that, as a consequence, Christians generally are sanctified but in part. We now propose to ask why it is so?

1. It cannot be because there has not been sufficient time since their conversion. This may have been the secret, if not avowed, impression of many. They were not wholly sanctified when they were justified. This they have learned by experience, if they did not from the Bible, where it is clearly taught: and they have argued that time is necessary for the completion of the work—how much time they know not; but a long time; and, at length, it has been, perhaps in many cases, unconsciously extended to the period of death. In this way, with a few, weeks and months, but with most, years—many long years, have passed, and the time for their entire consecration has not yet arrived.

But why might not the work have been sooner completed? Sin was pardoned, and the soul regenerated, thus removing the obstacles to the work, though not fulfilling the conditions of it. There is surely no time fixed in the Scriptures, which must elapse before the work can be accomplished. The Savior prays for his

disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth," assuming that they were all at that time eligible to this great blessing. And in view of the same fact, Paul prays, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." The only one pre-requisite seems to be the Christian or converted state. Even "babes in Christ" are exhorted to "go on to perfection;" and all believers are included in the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The want of time has not been the difficulty. Alas, how many gracious privileges have been neglected! how long have most of us been called to holiness! what darkness and condemnation have we brought upon our souls by refusing the call, or postponing attention to it to another period! All of which clearly shows, that, had we given the subject suitable consideration, we might have been long since wholly saved from sin.

Indeed, there has been such variety in the periods of entire sanctification, as to show clearly that no specific time must elapse before the converted man may enter into the rest of perfect love. In a few instances, we believe, the blessing has been received so soon after regeneration, as to make the periods seem entirely identical; and all times, from this infant state to the greatest age of Christians on earth, have been found available for this gracious work. But reasons vast as eternity may be urged in favor of entering early in our Christian state upon this glorious privilege of the sons of God. What dangers beset the path of those who are but partially sanctified! What numbers backslide! What numbers are finally lost, by neglecting the present imperative call to holiness of heart and life! And what can be gained by delay? How many have been com-

pelled to own, that they have lost much; lost the favor of God; lost growth in grace; lost the power of usefulness; lost interest in the subject; become dead weights upon the church, merely by delaying the work of full consecration! Time! dear brethren; there has been no want of time. But let us rouse ourselves to a consideration of our present duty, our present privilege, or the favored time—the last time for this holy work, will have gone by forever.

It cannot be because entire salvation has not been our privilege and duty. The great declaration, "It is the will of God, even your sanctification," has been always true of every believer. It has always been a direct revelation to every Christian. Of what one of all God's dear children can it be said, He is an exception; she cannot have the blessing? Who would say, The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin all the converted, who will fully appropriate it, except such as these? Who could say, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but not you? No such exceptions are made. The blessed privilege is as general as the church of the living God. To you, to every soul delivered from the guilt of sin, the charge is given; "Wherefore come ye out from among them, [the worldly,] and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves [in the blood of Christ, at once] from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." To every one the entreaty is addressed,

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [a part for the whole] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." For every converted man and woman the prayer is fervently urged at the throne of grace: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And how inspiring the promise that is added, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it!" Let no believer, therefore, indulge the apprehension that he is excluded from the high and holy privilege. These scriptures, as we see, hush every fear, and call every soul up to this perfect standard. And why this general delay?

2. We fear attention has not been called so distinctly and forcibly to the doctrine of holiness as it should have been. Sermons have too generally stopped short of it. Other fundamental doctrines of the gospel have been allowed paramount attention—whereas it has been fully shown that they all depend upon this for their significance, and all point to it as their ultimate aim; and we must express the fear that even philosophical discussions, polemical divinity, splendid rhetoric and oratorical displays have not unfrequently been deemed more important to assembled multitudes, hungering for the bread of life, than the great doctrine of entire sactification.

Pastoral visitations have been made, and repeated time

and again, without a word or a hint upon this great privilege of believers. Prayers have been offered in the house of God, around the family altar, and by the bed of the sick and dying, but with no such distinct allusion to the duty of present, full salvation, as to inform, convince, and arouse the soul to take hold of it as the purchased inheritance of every believer! How, in view of these facts, can it be matter of surprise that Christians generally are sanctified but in part?

3. We do not make it a distinct subject of study. The Bible is full of it; but how many read the Bible without ever observing that it contains provisions for our entire salvation in this life! How many, who are fully aware of this truth, allow the positive commands — the gracious promises — the ample illustrations which relate to it, to meet their eyes almost daily, without ever pausing to ponder them! How many, who believe sincerely that it is both their privilege and duty to be cleansed from all sin, never make a serious effort to use the word of God as a guide to that rich grace Must not all such inevitably remain unsanctified?

We have many excellent writings upon this subject; but who read them? We fear but a small proportion of those who are sanctified but in part. Christian literature has given great prominence to the doctrine of perfect love. But will not the truth compel the confession, that the majority of the church utterly neglect the great productions of our master minds upon this subject? We cannot say that Christians, the class under consideration, deliberately prefer a work of fiction to a searching book on Christian Perfection; but we must say, that, in multitudes of instances, the entire neglect

of works of this kind has prepared the way for that vicious taste which is now ruining the characters of thousands, and "drowning men's souls in perdition." And to what purpose have devout, and even splendid men of different Christian communions, addressed their brethren upon this subject, in cogent arguments and pathetic appeals? In a few instances, the results have been highly encouraging; but, generally, it must be confessed, the response is either cold neglect, or stern opposition. Whoever would, therefore, honestly endeavor to explain the imperfect sanctification of the church, must, we are sure, add this reason also: the pure and excellent books which pour a flood of light upon this great question, are not read!

Serious reflection is a powerful means of sanctification. Frequent, honest, self-examination detects the remaining depravity of the heart, begets an inward loathing of self, extorts the cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," and sends the panting, earnest spirit to the blood that cleanseth from all sin. Deep and searching study of the character of God, the nature of his law, the state of the soul, the remedies of the atonement, leads directly to the same result. Are we not, therefore, obliged to believe that those among us who are not aroused to a sense of their remaining sins, and who are not athirst for God and for holiness, neglect reflection upon this theme of really profound and thrilling interest? And is not this another clear ray of light upon the important question which we are endeavoring to solve?

SECOND; WANT OF SPECIAL PRAYER AND CONVICTION.

1. We do not make it a subject of prayer, as our duty, and its immense importance demand. Is there not generally a want of definiteness in our prayers? How commonly do we pray to be blessed, to be delivered from our enemies, to be saved, in such general terms as to show that our minds are not fixed distinctly upon any thing! But even when many wants are fully realized, and successfully urged at the throne of grace, is this want of entire purity likely to be among them? Do Christians generally go away to the closet feeling the burden of inward sin, and, with the distinct conception of a possible present deliverance from it, fall down before God expressly to pray for it? Is the total radical cure of sinful tendencies—the fulness of perfect love—the specific blessing usually prayed for by the converted? Far from it; and yet it is clearly included in the prayer composed for disciples by the Savior himself: "Thy will be done [by me] on earth, as it is done [by angels] in heaven." In attempting obedience to the great command, "Ask, and ye shall receive," we cannot, I think, be too explicit in fixing our minds upon the very blessing we desire; nor need we be surprised if, failing to ask entire deliverance from sin, we fail to receive it.

Is there not, also, a great want of fervor in our prayers, even when we think to ask the blessing of a clean heart? How frequently is it named, merely as a thing of course, without feeling, without concern, without agony of soul on account of our remaining sins, without importunity! The suppliant leaves the throne of grace

without being aware that he has on his knees felt his corruptions to be a burden, without a solemn impression that he is henceforth, by sacred covenant, entirely consecrated to God, solely for the reason that no such things have occurred. Had the subject been carefully studied before prayer—had the soul devoutly yielded to the powerful convictions which such study produces, and then gone away expressly to lay this great matter before God, we are sure no mere indistinct allusion to the subject would produce satisfaction—no mere mention of the great blessing would relieve the agony of the spirit. The importunity of the widow would characterize every petition; the fervor of the psalmist would be again exhibited, as the soul exclaimed, in broken accents, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God;" "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." We may be well assured that the cleansing baptism of the Holy Ghost will never be given to the cold desire, the half-hearted request. Certainly this very style of praying must of itself go far toward explaining the imperfect sanctification of the church.

And are we not too unsteady in our prayers? We are often deeply convicted by the Holy Spirit of the necessity of purification. Under the power of this conviction, we cry out for full salvation; but the occasion passes, and we suffer our interest in the subject to die away! Our prayers assume the common style, until some other powerful excitement rouses us again to the mighty work. But nothing is promised to such instability. We must bow our souls under the cross, to remain there; we must make our covenant never to be

broken; our prayers must be urged till the request be granted. The very general failure of prayers is a strong intimation that they have not been steady—not persevering.

And, finally, is not the want of faith in prayer the grand defect which explains all others? Faith, had it been clear, strong and unwavering, could not have left so many of us in our present state of imperfect sanctification. The Holy Spirit has power to cleanse; the blood of Christ must prevail, if we will only appropriate it. Faith that casts the soul forever upon the merit of Christ, for this very object, must be triumphant. But how unbelieving have been the souls which have long felt the need of this gracious work! Unbelief, that we must admit to be without reason, without excuse, has strangely paralyzed the energies of the church, and extensively defeated the glorious purpose of the Redeemer to "purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." How can it be otherwise? What can be more palpably inconsistent, than for any man to say with his lips, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!" and in his heart, "I do not believe thou canst do it! Sanctify me wholly; but I do not believe it is thy will that I should be thus sanctified! 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults,' but I expect no such thing to occur! Give me the mind that was in Christ: but such a thing is impossible." And is not this a true representation of much of the praying which is done in the church, for entire salvation? Such prayers cannot succeed.

2. The great doctrine of holiness, as an experimental and practical doctrine, has not been admitted into the

convictions and affections of the church generally. Multitudes deny it outright. Many others barely admit it as a possibility. And many believe it as a part of their creed, merely intending, at some other time, to give it consideration! These are facts which none can deny. Many reasons may be given. Inward corruptions oppose the study of it, and resist all attempts to reduce it to practice. The world, in its spirit, bears up against it with a dreadful force. The devil never ceases to exert himself to conceal it from our eyes; and if he fails in this, his final effort is to distort our views of it, and postpone the period of its serious consideration. An affected or real timidity prevents most professors of religion from mentioning the subject for years and years together. Nearly all the great efforts at reform are directed to the conduct, and not to the heart—to the streams, and not to the fountain. How often do sincere men bow before God in the morning, with the devout desire to live that day without sin! The purpose is solemnly formed to do so; the aid of the Holy Spirit is invoked in carrying out the noble purpose; but scarcely an hour passes, before the worldly, sinful elements within break out anew. The day passes, and leaves upon the soul its fearful burden! Sad repentance, or carnal stupidity, ends it; and the morning comes but to renew the same demands, the same resolutions, the same delinquencies, and the same sadness of heart. The holy Bible explains the grievous cause of all their trouble! It is within them. If they were cleansed from all unrighteousness—if they were filled with holiness and love—how sweet would be their rest—how strong their faith—how bright their joys. Days and nights would

move quietly on—no disturbing force would be sufficient to destroy their equilibrium. The fountain purified would send out its streams of holy love, of perfect patience, and triumphant bliss.

But all this occurs only with a few—the devout, the simple-hearted, thoughtful, trusting few! The great multitude hold the preparations for these grand results at a great distance; tremble for fear when they are mentioned; and as soon as decent etiquette will allow, waive the subject in favor of something less difficult, less condemning, more popular. Perhaps a theme directly worldly, is preferred to the glorious truth, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." This is an outside matter—a thing to be mentioned but seldom, and never to be urged; foreign from the deep convictions, and ardent love of the church! This, of itself, we are sure, would answer the question, Why are Christians generally sanctified but in part?

SEC. III. THE FACT DEPRECATED.

FIRST; CONSEQUENCES TO NEGLECTERS.

The fact, that Christians generally are sanctified but in part, has been shown, and accounted for. In the fear of God let us now ask, what are the consequences? There are, there must be, consequences of eternal moment connected with such a fact as this; for, let it be observed, that it implies a state of sin, against which special provisions have been made in the gospel—a state of sin long continued, in the midst of light by which it is

clearly exposed! Surely Christians, though they resist, and subdue the tendencies of this state, cannot continue in it, for many months and years, without serious consequences to themselves.

1. The first is, fearful advantage to their great enemy, the devil. He comes to them with artful blandishments, to induce a spirit of scepticism, and they have a tendency to unbelief. He comes to enslave them with fear, and they have a strong inclination to fear. He comes to inflate them with inordinate esteem of themselves, and they have a predisposition to pride. He comes to inspire them with a love of the world, its wealth, its honors, its pleasures; and the worldly element has not yet wholly perished within them. He comes to inflame their lusts, and these, though wounded, often show a fearful life, and struggle against the Spirit with terrific power. He comes to excite them to anger, and their natural irritability of temper is not wholly cured. He comes to obscure the path of duty, and their spiritual vision is yet quite dim. He comes to induce rebellion against God, and their spirit of disobedience is not utterly eradicated. And thus we might go on through the whole round of schemes and temptations, which arch sagacity or malignant hate can invent, and we should find, in the mass of Christians, some tendency, more or less concealed, of greater or less power, to yield to these satanic demands. What a fearful advantage is thus allowed to the enemy! Need it be deemed a matter of surprise, that the soul, in such a state, is so often filled with gloom and terror? Nay, that the whole foundation of Christian joy and hope is so frequently shaken to its centre?

2. Another consequence is, frequent defeat in this dreadful battle. True, to retain their Christian character, these brethren must conquer in every temptation; for "he that is born of God doth not commit sin." And to regain that character, when once it is lost, they must "repent, and do their first works." But how frequent are failures in the former, and how often the latter is the only remaining resort, let honest experience and truth-telling conscience declare. With what sorrowful literalness does this familiar stanza describe the lives of multitudes of converted men:

> "Here I repent, and sin again;
> Now I revive, and now am slain;
> Slain with that same unhappy dart,
> Which, O, too often wounds my heart."

Admit, as we are compelled to do, that sin and repentance, and even final apostasy, are possible, in the highest state of Christian perfection, yet who can fail to see how dreadfully our exposures are increased by remaining inbred sin! We are compelled to declare, that, in our honest judgment, there are few cases of only partial sanctification, in which every single day does not make bitter work for repentance. So violent are the struggles of the strong man bound; so forcible are the affinities between external temptation and internal condition, and so weak and wavering are the Christian purpose of the will, and the trust in a Redeemer, that inward, and even outward sin, with alarming frequency, requires pardon in order to a state of acceptance with the Lord. Is it not so? Would that it were not! What relief would it bring to our hearts at this moment,

to be able to prove ourselves in error! But we cannot. With our eyes open to the light of history and revelation, the fact would meet us at every step, even though we should utterly fail to account for it. But with the unsanctified state of the church before us, recognizing, as we are obliged to do, the remaining predisposition to comply with temptation, there is no room left for surprise that so many fall into sin. Nay, it is rather surprising, it is indeed a miracle of grace, that we conquer at all, under these frightful disadvantages. Grace, never wants power. It is no disparagement of grace, but the contrary, to show the fatal tendencies of its neglect.

3. Here must be sought the origin of those grievous apostasies which have dishonored the church, and ruined the souls of men. It is sufficiently lamentable to observe the yieldings of converted souls to the combined power of inward and outward seduction, even when they speedily rally, and regain their forfeited treasure. But, alas! who can ensure the rising again of those spiritually slain? How innumerable the company of those who have ultimately "denied the Lord that bought them," as the legitimate result of long-tolerated internal corruptions! Failing to see that much of the great moral revolution which religion required remained to be accomplished; that their perfection in holiness was made dependent upon fidelity to the grace already given; that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" that earnestly crying to God for "a clean heart" was every believer's duty; that faith in Christ for entire sanctification, was the only way fully to honor him; and that repose in a justified state was sin against

the great apostolic summons, "Let us go on to perfection;" either neglecting or despising the evidences of these glorious truths, they have been swept away by the overwhelming flood of internal corruption and external temptation. Can there be any question of this? Who, that believes in the possibility of either temporary or final apostasy, could suggest a mode of backsliding more effectual, more inevitable, than to allow the sinful propensities of our nature to remain undisturbed; to disobey the great law of progress, which is revealed as sacredly binding upon every converted man; to neglect the blood which offers to cleanse from all unrighteousness, and decline, as a thing of naught, the purifying baptism of the Holy Ghost! This, it is true, is not done deliberately, and at once. The converted man would shrink from the idea of so great a crime with instinctive horror. But it is the gradual result of procrastination. It is chargeable, we fear, to an alarming extent, upon that ministry which neglects to call attention to the glorious privilege of full redemption; that fails to enforce the doctrine of holiness by a clear experience, a sanctified life, and by powerful appeals from the word of God! Heaven save us from such an awful responsibility! But by whatever means it has occurred, one thing is certain, the great doctrine of Christian perfection has been neglected, and we may see the result in the state of the church. Thousands, once happy in God, have neglected it, and are now in hell. Thousands more have neglected it, and are now among the most profane of all the wicked that throng the broad road to death. Thousands more have neglected it, and are now hanging upon the church as a body of death, from which deliverance, if it come at all,

seems far in the distance. Thousands more are neglecting it, and are backsliding as fast as the devil could desire. O! where will this thing end? What power from eternity shall rouse the slumbering church to its only salvation?

SECOND: BUT THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES TO THE CHURCH.

1. Among these must be reckoned, her equivocal state before the world. Were her converts, or even those of them who retain, for a considerable time, the blessing of justification, to "go on to perfection," who would be at a loss to determine the true character of the church? What excuse could then be given for calling in question her integrity, or doubting her commission from heaven to evangelize the world? Certainly it is the fact, that her members generally are sanctified but in part, that renders her position doubtful, that emboldens her enemies to challenge her legitimacy, and question her prerogatives. Indeed, such is the nearness of resemblance between her masses and the better portions of the world, that she often scarcely knows herself, and is frequently in alarming doubt whether she has not, by some sad fatality, lost her own identity. We allege, that, were the regenerated of the church all on the stretch for holiness, or in the full possession of it, there could be no such doubting in what character she exists before the world—nothing equivocal in the nature of her mission—nothing problematical in the success of it.

2. Her instability is another sad result of her remaining sins. Responsible men, invigorated with power from another life; set to be the world's light, in the

midst of its gloom; commissioned to reclaim a revolted race; bearing from Jehovah himself the seal of their commission; hastening on to eternity, to render their solemn account, ought to have nothing eccentric in their movements, ought not to act spasmodically upon the heart of the world. If moral dignity, if consistent action, if inflexible fidelity, belong to any body of men upon the face of the earth, it is to the church of Jesus Christ. But her unsanctified spirits cannot be held steadily to her holy work. They must be roused afresh at every onset upon the kingdom of darkness. And when the excitement of the action is over, they sink back into comparative lifelessness, and must be excited again to do battle valiantly for the Lord of hosts. Now could this be so, if she were cleansed from all iniquity—if she were a holy, "peculiar people, zealous of good works?" Surely it could not. To account for all her relapses, nothing further need be sought than the chilling effect of remaining depravity. To secure the invariable directness and stability of effort which her high commission demands, her entire sanctification alone is required.

3. Who can deny that the church shows signs of weakness in grappling with her numerous foes? O, it is a fearful war in which she is engaged! This whole world, in its natural state, is under the dominion of the devil, "the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience!" The sleepless, untiring enemy of our suffering race, assaults our great Father, whose tender mercies bless us; his divine Son, whose blood atones for us; and the Holy Spirit, whose energies sanctify us! He arrays as warriors of wrath his fellow-demons, and our wicked brethren, his deluded and hated vassals; and,

with these, attacks, at every hopeful point, and at every available moment, for thousands of years in succession, the recognized friends of the Holy Trinity. The church is God's embattled host against this mighty force, and sometimes she triumphs gloriously. But why not always? The weapons of her warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Alas! she is too often divested of her power to use these heavenly weapons. Not only are there enemies and traitors in her ranks, but remaining sympathy with her foes too often paralyzes her efforts, and sends her mourning from the field, when she ought to have been "more than conqueror." There is weakness in this contest, and what more is needed to account for it, than that such multitudes in the church are not entirely on the Lord's side? Divided hearts, divided forces, and defeat; united hearts, united forces, and triumph. So long as sanctification remains incomplete in so large a proportion of the church, we fear we shall have much of the former, and comparatively little of the latter. O that God would speedily remedy this alarming evil by a general baptism of the Holy Ghost!

4. But the church must mourn comparative inefficiency in her enterprises. Look at the mission of the church to herself. To purge her own members from inward sin—to secure their steady, rapid growth in holiness and love—to exercise a wholesome, thorough, Christian discipline, recovering as many as possible of her erring children, and promptly removing those who, by their irreligion, do more harm to her than she can do good to them—to maintain her spiritual services and temporal economy, she is sent to herself. This mission,

in fact, if not in form, she has always recognized. Efforts to accomplish these noble purposes for herself may be seen in all her societies. But who can carefully mark them, and not feel grieved at heart? Her most vigorous endeavors to lead her members into the fountain that "cleanseth from all sin," fall vastly short of their object. Indeed, even to convince them that entire salvation is possible, and necessary, to rouse them to a spirit of fervent, agonizing, persevering prayer for it, seems wholly beyond her strength. She tries to do it; but, with her small successes, for which the Lord be praised, what extensive, mournful failures mark her history! What can be the cause, if not that the immense aggregate of her inward corruptions deprives her of the spiritual holy power with which she is bound in duty to prosecute this work? How can her ministers thoroughly and effectually "show the house of Jacob her iniquities, and God's people their sins," and lead them to the cleansing blood, while they are themselves neither made "perfect in love," nor "groaning after it?" The cause of such lamentable weakness in these Heaven-sanctioned efforts, stands out as clear as the sun. Many of us to whose charge the work is solemnly committed, are sanctified but in part, and, with deep solicitude, but strict fidelity, we must add, some of us seem content to remain so.

The same explanations of the want of power in exertions to secure the steady and rapid growth in grace, of her members, will, we think, be found sufficient. These exertions are much more common and direct than those which aim at entire purification; and yet, we doubt not, many have been greatly surprised to see so many backsliding in the very midst of these

efforts, and to find at the end of the year so little progress, where so much has been expected! This inward earthly, sensual spirit, often neutralizes both the power and effect of the effort.

Christian discipline is lamentably weak among the churches of all denominations. When men begin to backslide, it seems as if we had almost no power to arrest them! We can hardly influence them to attend the external means of grace; and when it is known that they are wholly apostatized, and all efforts to reform them are unavailing, how difficult, if not impossible, to excommunicate them! The church often tries to cleanse herself by wholesome discipline; but it is well, indeed, if, on the whole, this gloomy work does not increase, rather than diminish upon her hands! We may be wrong, but we thoroughly believe that if experimental holiness had its due influence amongst us, no such weakness would exist. Complete success, it is true, might not be possible, because of our imperfection in knowledge; but we are sure we might be able to accomplish what our enlightened, sanctified intelligence should move us to undertake. Sin is weakness, but holiness is strength.

And the spiritual services and temporal economy of the church are maintained with far less efficiency than they richly deserve, and her friends desire. Warnings and appeals fall powerless upon the ears of the masses. Only a small number can be induced by any efforts, to attend the prayer, the conference, and the class meetings. The great majority stay away. Their states of mind draw them more powerfully elsewhere; and prayers, entreaties, tears, are all in vain.

With honorable exceptions, what begging, scheming, and debating, even among the wealthy, are necessary to obtain the small means required to build our churches and parsonages, support our ministry, and meet the other indispensable home expenses of religion, we need not try to show. Sad experience has superseded all other teaching here. Nor need we attempt to make plainer the humiliating truth, that remaining selfishness, which the fire of divine love should have wholly consumed, is the unchangeable obstruction to the needed benevolence of the church. This is certainly one of the most evident and sad results of the established fact, that Christians generally are sanctified but in part.

But the mission of the church to others demands our attention. The treasures of holy love are not committed to her for her own use alone; they are to be poured out for the benefit of the world. The nations are to be gathered to the Redeemer by her instrumentality. She knows this full well; and hence her mission to foreign lands, her Bible, and tract, and educational efforts. But here, perhaps, more than anywhere else, her weakness appears. God forbid that we should in any sense undervalue the work already accomplished, and in delightful progress, in all these holy enterprises. But when we look at the state of the world, the ignorance, the corruption, and the peril of spirits enveloped in the darkness of heathenism and infidelity; when we think of the hundreds of millions who "know not the Lord," to whom there is no written revelation—no civilization—no Sabbath—no Gospel message,—for whom there is no light shining upon the death-bed, or the grave, or eternity;—when we reflect upon the many

thousands of these deathless souls, that are annually ushered into the spirit-world, and then contemplate the limited efforts of the church to save them, we are amazed at the indifference with which these facts are regarded. O what means this stinted, measured, forced contribution, to a cause, which by its living interest, ought to set the whole church on fire? In the name of God, we ask, why do we rest contented amid the glories of a gospel day, while our poor brethren are perishing by thousands, in the darkness of heathen night? Why do we lavish our tens of thousands upon our persons, our tables, our children, our worldly enterprises, and give but a miserable pittance to save men from hell—to deck with immortal gems the coronet of the Redeemer? Why will we so long hesitate to explore the land of sorrow and death, —why refuse to rush into the field to rescue our fellows from the dominion of the devil, when multitudes, even of our own number, peril life and character, time and eternity, for the treasures of earth? Alas! there is so much of unsanctified self—so much of sin remaining in our hearts, that we have no power to make the sacrifices—no strength to do the work! We look out mournfully upon the scene of desolation, but we are too weak to reach it! We cry out to God to save, and then give the struggle over! We weep for our selfishness, under the pathetic appeals of ten thousand dying men, echoed by a servant of Christ; give a few pence, or it may be dollars;—half as much, perhaps, as we would expend for a sumptuous dinner, if a number of the rich were our guests; and then with our consciences appeased, give ourselves no further trouble, till another

anniversary arrives! O God, lay not this sin to our charge! Turn thou our eyes within us, that we may see the fatal cause of our deadly slumberings over a world in ruins! O remove our inward corruptions, that the gushing sympathies of our sanctified natures may flow out to our suffering brethren in streams of holy love! Baptize us with the Holy Ghost, that we may be thrust out upon errands of mercy, through the ten thousand doors opened by thine own omnipotent arm, before our wondering eyes; and eternity shall echo the praise of that grace which answers now our earnest prayers.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CENTRAL IDEA IN ITS CLAIMS.

SEC. I. IT IS DESIRABLE TO BE HOLY.

FIRST: SHOWN FROM THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF SIN.

It is desirable to be holy, at least so it would seem to us; so, if we are not wholly mistaken, it must seem to all. Even opponents of the doctrine, must, upon sober reflection, exceedingly regret that, in their humble opinion, no available provisions have been made in the gospel, to save the soul entirely, and in this life, from so dread an evil;—or that provision having been made, it is placed beyond our reach;—or if entirely possible, we are so constituted that we never can, or never will, avail ourselves of it. We have often imagined that devout persons, unfortunately restricted by theological systems, must be driven again and again to search the Scriptures, and pore over the records of piety, to see whether, after all, there is not some lurking error in the view, which deprives the thirsty soul of full draughts of salvation; so abhorrent are the slightest motions of inward depravity to the truly regenerate. We shall write in harmony, therefore, with the feelings of such Christians, whatever difficulties mere theory may oppose, when we attempt to show how desirable it is to be "pure in heart." And amongst the

thousands who in honest faith receive the doctrine of experimental holiness as a practical reality, there must be extremely few who, even under the greatest delusion, cherish sin—or defend it from real affection; and yet, surely the delay, the shrinking when the subject is mentioned, and the various apologetic theories put forth, justify the conviction that the true desirableness of "a clean heart," is not appreciated by the church.

1. Let us look at the nature of sin. In principle, and in fact, it is rebellion against God. His will is revealed in the Bible. His holy law is the principle upon which the moral harmony of the universe depends; and yet sin attacks that principle—subjects it to utter contempt, and tramples it under foot. It is the rule which binds the creature to the Creator, the subject to the sovereign, the child to the parent, the beneficiary to the benefactor; but sin, in full view of all these sacred relations, perpetrates its high enormities. Man, under its influence, says, "I know I did not create myself—I know a Divine Power brought me into being, and that power has a right to demand all my services, but I will not yield to that demand. I acknowledge the right, and rebel against it. Those creature abilities shall serve my own purposes, my own lusts. There in heaven, and every where is my rightful Lord, the Being who holds the destinies of the universe. But I defy him! let him order as he will, I will not obey the order! I will be my own ruler! I will live as I list, in despite of him! Let him throw down his law, as a line of fire to stop me; I will rush over it! He is my Father, I am but his weak, dependent helpless child. Every day he feeds me, and every breath I receive from his Almighty

Providence. See now! I will insult him—despise him! Let him command me—threaten me—expostulate with me; I will resist all! He has no love that shall win me—no terrors that shall awe me—no authority that shall bind my will!" Such is sin, the transgression of that law which is founded upon every relation held sacred by God or man.

And it is more. There are sacred duties binding upon the moral agent. Heaven enjoins repentance, but the sinner says, "I will cling to my sins—I do not regret them. I love them, and will repeat them as often as I have an opportunity. Heaven requires trust in the divine veracity, in his omnipotent power, and holy love; but I will not confide in him. Faith is the great want of my soul, the proffer of divine grace, the most reasonable exercise of a rational mind; but I will not trust in the Being whom I know to be unalterable truth;—whose word can never fail;—I will not rely upon the things I know to be true, and the only truths that are of inevitable and eternal moment to me. Heaven requires that I should pray, but I choose to 'restrain prayer.'—'Who is the Lord, that I should serve him, and what profit shall I have if I pray unto him?' No confession, contrition, deprecation, or petition, shall have place in my heart, or fall from my lips. God, my bountiful benefactor, requires my affections, I see him, 'the fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely;' but I will not love him. I can love the creature, man; a specimen of moral deformity; myself, the very type of folly and odiousness; but not God—the pure, benevolent, and faithful God! The great Jehovah demands that I should fear him, and though I see

him clothed in majesty and strength—with the terrors of justice flashing from his eye, yet I shall render him no filial awe. I fear my fellow man, the frown of the populace, the ban of fashion—every thing mean and contemptible, but not God—the righteous, sin-avenging God! It is required by him who has the right, that I should 'love my neighbor as myself;' but my neighbor—who is he, that he should occupy my time, engross my sympathies, absorb my means, and interfere with my enterprises? If I can use him in any way, if I can compel him to supply my wants, administer to my passions, or elevate me for the adulations of my fellows, very well—if not, I have no special interest in him." And so of every duty. Sin is neglect—continued, obstinate, constantly recurring neglect. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

And this is not all. It is gross inward corruption. No symmetrical, beautiful human figure can illustrate it. As said the prophet, of the moral condition of the Jews, so says the truth of all who are under the influence of sin—"The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." A putrid mass of loathsome corruption! Deeply seated within the soul, lies the source of outward rebellion. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit"—"An evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil"—nothing is right within. The passions are perverted—

the affections are alienated—the conscience is untruthful —the will is rebellious. Wrong—every thing wrong in the soul, and "all unrighteousness is sin."

One other thing must be said of sin, distinctly, that it may be impressively. It rejects the Son of God! It is in the light of Calvary, that all sin has its true deformity. The race are not merely the unfortunate descendants of guilty parents;—not vile, because by inheritance doomed to be vile;—not rebellious because hopeless. The love of God has attempted to reach them. A scheme of stupendous mercy has been devised. The only begotten has appeared in flesh. Earth has seen and felt his compassion, and received his blood! To every mortal ear the call is issued, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The guilty are offered pardon, the rebellious mercy, the dead life, the polluted purification. It is against all this that sin persists in its obstinacy. There is no power in dying love to melt the heart! There are no charms in the Redeemer to win its affections! The gospel instructs, intreats, threatens, and commands, in vain. The vast remedial scheme, with its endless variety of expedients, involving the resources of a God, by sin is mocked, despised, and rejected. Can we—need we say more! Is there any other light in which it appears so vile, so flagrant, so terrible?

Such is sin, as a violation of divine law, as a neglect of sacred duty, as a principle of innate, habitual, cultivated depravity. Such is the rejection of divine compassion. Thus it "tramples under foot the Son of God." Can it be in any sense desirable? No. All will instinctively say, surely not in its grosser forms. It is offensive even to decency, in the forms of idolatry, profanity,

Sabbath-breaking, disobedience to parents, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, and covetousness. From all these we pray to be delivered; however much we may be in spirit attached to any of them. And Christians feel that, in the sense of guilt, they cannot bear it. From its condemning power, they entreat, by night and day, to be delivered. Strange, that, in any of its forms, it should be allowed a home in the soul. For the mere fact of having within, the seeds of sin, the roots of bitterness, the fountain of "bitter waters," how few of the church give themselves any heartfelt trouble, feel any pain of conscience, or engage in any struggle of prayer! But in this form of inward depravity, is it any more desirable, any less offensive, or dangerous? It is verily the same in principle, whether within, or without. In the outward forms of hateful vice, or robed in the garb of loveliness and beauty; breaking out in rebellion, or suppressed and governed, it is the same offensive "thing that God hates." True, the condition of the sinner is by no means the same in an unforgiven, and in a pardoned state. There is rich mercy in pardon. There are the beginnings of a complete salvation in justification. There is the earnest of a blissful immortality in regeneration. But we must not be misled by the comfort of pardon, the joy and triumph of a new birth, and the glorious hopes of immortality, to pass over with indifference the corruption which remains; to feel or suppose that God has waived, in its favor, the claims of his holy law, or that it is entitled, in any form, to our toleration, or sufferance, because we have been enabled by grace to conquer it. We must examine it in the light of revelation,

and of a convicted conscience, until we can see all its deformity. We must watch its tendencies until we can realize that it is just as corrupt and rebellious as in any condition whatever;—that it embraces the first opportunity to flame out against God, and against the soul; that, just as in any form, it will give a welcome home to the devil, and the world; lead the spirit away from Christ and duty; chill its affections, and pervert its judgment. Just as surely, then, as it is desirable to be delivered from sin at all, it is desirable to be delivered from all sin. Desirable, as sin is wrong in itself, odious to God, against the rights of the Savior, and at war with the operations of the Holy Spirit. Desirable, in every aspect in which it can be viewed. Desirable in proportion to its inherent malignity, its corrupting, damning power over the souls in which it is allowed to reign. O, who can look at it, and love it? Who can answer its deformity with a smile? Who can permit with quiet complacency, its concentrated poison in the soul? How exceedingly desirable is deliverance from all sin on its own account! Let each of us think, and examine, and pray, until we shall cry out for deliverance merely because we loathe it more than any thing offensive to us, in the universe of God.

2. Look at the effects of sin. Sin has interrupted the moral harmony of the universe. It has arrayed the creature against his Creator. It turned rebellious angels out of heaven, and man out of Paradise. It kindled the flames of hell, and produced all the malignity and woe of that fearful place, where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever." It brought the death-penalty upon our race, and the curse of God

upon our earth. It has arrayed man against his fellow-man, and drenched the earth in blood. It has offended the eye with sights of pollution, and the ear with sounds of cursing and blasphemy. Who can defend it? Who can look out upon its devastations, and plead for it? But let us examine its work more minutely.

First of all, it defiles what God intended should be holy. The moral nature, the conscience, the heart,—created originally in God's own image;—pure as the sun light, white as the driven snow, has been corrupted by sin, has become "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Its moral vision is hence darkened. Its discriminations are inaccurate. Amid the wild confusion of principles, right and wrong,—the endless diversity of things which ought, and ought not to be done, the soul is confused, and gropes its way in darkness, where it ought to have moved with unerring accuracy. How melancholy to see the exalted good, rejected as though it were bane to the soul; the degrading evil seized as the richest luxury; the moral judgment misled, when the feeble desire to do right is struggling for the ascendency! And then how corrupt and powerless the moral impulsions towards the right, when clearly seen! What stronger evidence of the deep moral depravation of the soul, than that the wrong attracts, and the right repels it! How justly may the sinner say,

> "I see the right, and I approve it too,
> I see the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue."

And how little pain does the soul endure in reflecting upon its guilty decisions! Were it pure as when God created it, sin would inflict severest suffering. As the

nerve shrinks from the knife, as the eye from dust or gravel, the uncorrupted conscience would writhe at the touch of crime. Now, in what myriads of instances does it delight and revel in sin! At first, perhaps, and afterwards occasionally, when the spirit of God arouses the conscience, it shrinks from contemplated wrong, and endures more or less pain upon the remembrance of offences against the laws of God. But how soon are these kindly admonitions hushed, amid the clamors of appetite, and destroyed by the power of vicious habit! And the susceptibility of pleasure upon the performance of the right, shares the same fate, until, in point of fact, the fallen spirit is more seriously discommoded by the right, than the wrong—the pure than the impure. These are the effects of sin upon the soul; and there are others.

The passions have shared deeply in the general depravation. The affections are perverted, are torn from God, the race, and holiness, and placed upon the world, and self. The pure and elevated benevolence which God designed to reign over the soul, has been driven from the throne, and malevolence has usurped the sway. Anger rises up where only aversion to the wrong, and pity for the offender are due. Envy stares at the successful and the happy, when congratulations and delight ought to tremble upon the lip, and beam from the eye. Jealousy sends out its venom in the stead of genial sympathy, and unwavering confidence. Pride flatters and demands, where humility and meekness ought to dwell in deep composure, and yielding simplicity. Lust burns and devours, where purity should reign. Indeed, the whole desirous and emotional man is perverted by sin.

Who can vindicate the cause of such sad revulsions, such fearful wrongs, such frightful disasters?

But the sensibilities have not suffered alone. The whole intellect is involved. Its power to know, and think, and reason, is paralyzed; and eternity alone will reveal the struggles it has passed, to arouse itself from its lethargy, to open its eyes upon the light, to grapple with the mysteries of nature and of God, to solve the dark problems of science, and of life, to separate the true from the false, to correct its errors, and prevent their fatal results. Mind was intended for work, but not against such fearful odds—to study, but not in the dark—to expand and develop itself, but not in a state of infirmity and disease—to rise and soar amid the splendors of the firmament, and the glories of heaven, but not against the ponderous load of sin it bears. Alas, what universal wreck in the architecture of God! What magnificent ruins reveal the perfection of the design, and the destruction of the temple! And yet we are asked to show mercy to the spoiler, and preserve for him somewhere, and for a time, at least, a sanctuary in the inner nature!

One obstinate final stand, made by this one dread enemy, must not be overlooked. He has seized the moral active power of man,—has induced its stubborn resistance against the higher sense of duty—against the most affectionate appeals of truth and of interest; he has taught the soul to say no, when the Bible entreats and conscience urges, and God commands. The perverted will, which originates action, which gives character and direction to the soul's doings, yields now, when it ought to be firm; stops, when it ought to advance; rushes on

when it ought to pause, and fills the soul with obduracy, when it ought to be tender and submissive. These sad results of sin join with those we have named before, to condemn and denounce it.

But not only is inward depravity thus the source of wrong being, and wrong actions. It produces guilt and misery, which no language can describe. God condemns it and those who willingly retain it. However "dead in trespasses and in sins," the soul is destined some time to awake—awake to the dread consciousness of inward wrongs, to the fearful fact of war with God. The "sting of death" is in it, and there it must inflict its terrible wounds, and infuse its malignant poison. It is "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." It is like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." Inward conscious guilt—the dread forebodings of coming retribution—the horrors of endless death already begun, prey upon the soul, paralyze its energies, and destroy its usefulness. The effects of sin! Alas! who can describe them?

Look into the suffering hearts of guilty millions, and see the storms that are raging there;—look out upon the scenes of woe that darken the face of day;—look into the lanes, and courts, and alleys,—the cellars, and garrets of crowded cities;—listen to the wail of distress, as it comes up from the couch of suffering, and of death—to the sobs and groans and shrieks of agony, from the hearts, riven by untold calamities, or dark with corruptions, unseen but by the eye of God. Hear the angry curses, and the terrible blasphemies which roll from the

lips, designed to utter Jehovah's praise;—see justice trampled to the earth—mercy bleeding with wounds, inflicted by those, over whom she weeps in sympathy and love;—see decency violated—the poor neglected—the weak crushed by the arm of power—humanity outraged, and the Sovereign God despised;—look upon "the whole creation, groaning and travelling in pain together until now," and then say if you have a plea to offer for sin,—if for anything it has ever done, you can offer for it a vindication or excuse,—if there be any form or degree of it, that you wish to hide in your heart.

Nay, go on to the judgment, and see its doings by the light of a burning world, and the flames of hell. Look at the pale and horror-stricken throng upon the left of the Judge;—imagine, if you can, the agony of that suspense which awaits the final doom—the depth of that woe which fills the guilty, as they see the multitudes of the redeemed rise up, and on wings, of fire, move into the world of light, when the terrible conviction sinks into their hearts, that they can never enter there;—think of the bolt of flaming wrath, that must strike them, as they hear the sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,"—of the consuming anguish of a world of sinners, amid "the fire that shall never be quenched," and the gnawings of "the worm that never dies;"—see the "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" when the "smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever!" And, as upon the waves of dark damnation, their spirits rise, and cry "How long, oh Lord, how long," hear the sentence of justice, echo and re-echo from the walls of fire,

"Eternity," "eternity!" and then behold them plunge again, to rage and welter, amid that sea which "burneth with fire and brimstone;" where devils live, and hiss, and curse, and rage, for ever and for ever! O, tell me, will you cherish that which has produced these scenes of woe?

Say not, sin has no power if it be subdued and pardoned. Too many have found to their sorrow, that "the least remains of sin," after regeneration, had power to germinate and produce the fruits of death. With what fearful strength will it rise, and extend, and struggle to overthrow you! How promptly will it claim affinity with the temptations of the devil, and the allurements of the world! How many, through the influence of remaining depravity, have been betrayed into angry passions, into vanity, pride, and unbridled lust! How many have gradually yielded to the suggestions of an evil heart, and found, at length, that their strength was lost, their confidence gone, their Savior grieved, and their souls brought into bitter condemnation! It is not safe to rest in this state for an hour. When we see "how great a matter a little fire kindleth,"—that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,"—how many thousands have been slain by harbored inward foes, which have seemed to be harmless—what a mass of backsliders there are now in the church, for the very reason, that they have been satisfied without going on to perfection, we are ready to say, Surely, it is desirable to be cleansed from all sin,—from the last and least remains of sin. Desirable? O what desires should rise up and struggle within us—what longings for deliverance—what restless breathings after full redemption! When, by steady, sincere reflection,

we see the effects of sin—even of sin remaining after conversion; when, by quickened memory, we recall the wrongs and the perils of the past;—when we look out with deep and earnest gaze, into the crimes, and woes of the world, and forward into the scenes of death and the judgment, and see the ruin which has followed in its train, we shall realize, and yet inadequately, how desirable it is, to be delivered from all sin.

SECOND: SHOWN FROM THE NATURE AND RESULTS OF HOLINESS.

1. Holiness is desirable in itself. It is purity; and we are formed to admire purity. Even the garments we wear about us are comfortable only when they are perfectly clean. If they become soiled, they are offensive. We brush them again and again, to remove from them the smallest particles of dust. If their quality will admit of it, we wash them and polish them, until they are as white as the driven snow. What comfort, what genuine satisfaction we realize, when every garment is perfectly pure; and how uneasy, how dissatisfied with ourselves, when the dust and sweat of the day adhere to us. With what instinctive loathing do we look upon the filthy and negligent around us. They may have excellent traits of character; they may be our kindred, and we may bear them the kindest regard, but can by no means avoid that nervous shrinking, in their presence, which was designed to protect us from pollution. The residences of the vicious and degraded are odious, chiefly from their impurity, while we should wish to get out of the most splendid mansion on earth,

if it were kept in a neglected and unclean condition. We feel attracted to persons of taste, on that account alone; not to those who are distinguished by self-inflation, and the airs of vanity, but to those who are neat in person. The homeliest garb is entirely acceptable, even in good company, if it is perfectly clean, while the costliest attire can in no way compensate for stains, or neglected rents. We avoid the shops, and public houses, that are filthy, and patronize, even at much greater cost, those which are neat and tasteful. Dealers, of all kinds, polish their wares to the highest degree of brightness, to meet a law of God in the human soul; and if they fall into the mire, and receive ineffaceable stains, though strong and durable as ever, they are utterly spoiled.

From physical to moral purity, the transition is easy. It is made in the Scriptures, and the illustration is remarkably significant. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," "Come, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, though they be red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow." "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin." "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The soul, stained by sin, dark in moral corruption, may be "cleansed"—"sanctified," as the impurities of a garment are cleansed by washing. And what, to the eye of a clear conscience, is more offensive than moral defilement, polluting, degrading, ruining the soul? How do we shrink from it in ourselves, or when we behold it in others. Impurity of thought, and feeling, and purpose, and motive! How it mars

the perfect workmanship of God! Sinners as we are, we cannot approve it. We can but look upon it with horror, and, as our souls become enlightened, with unutterable loathing and disgust. But how lovely are the manifestations of moral purity. We pause before it with feelings of admiration, and almost of envy. In the character of a friend, it is the most attractive charm. It is the very essence and richness of moral beauty. It is the brightest splendor of angels. When we think of them, it is not chiefly as spiritual beings who "excel in strength;"—we do not dwell upon their swiftness in motion, nor yet upon their ministering benevolence, so much as upon their unsullied purity. How charming the idea of their presence, lovely as they are in holiness. What would be the value of an angel's power, an angel's intelligence, an angel's society, if once defiled by sin—if stained by corruption? Let the deep damnation of hell answer. No charms in an angel, amid the glories of his lofty intelligence, if once he is fallen,—if stained by sin. Brilliant as are his powers, he is then but a devil.

And what do we most admire in the heavenly world? It may be different with others, but to us, holiness is the grand central attraction of heaven. If sin should enter it, "Ichabod" would be written upon its walls of sapphire, and the light of its glory would be exchanged for the night of perdition. The higher orders of intelligence that range the fields of light, are bright in unsullied purity. The redeemed are lovely, because "they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And of all the attributes assembled in the awful majesty of the Triune God, there is nothing

to us of such wonderful attraction, as that which compels the bright retinues of heaven to cry, "Holy! holy! holy! Lord God Almighty; which was and is and is to come." How desirable! Apart from all its amazing results, with what intense desire do we gaze upon it, and long to grasp it—to feel its power, and revel in its essential excellence!

It is purity; and it is perfect righteousness. We desire it for this. Man's nature decides that holiness is right; that all impurity is inherently and unalterably wrong; that, while we exact purity in every thing else, the immortal soul ought not to be an exception. In the nature of God, we see an infinite reason for the righteousness of holiness. He is our Creator. No moral condition can be right but such as he could give us—such as he could create. All our attempts to be reconciled to a state of inward impurity, are rebuked by the awful purity of Jehovah. In the nature of law, we see the eternal right of holiness. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" and in this incorruptible holiness we see the unalterable wrong of all impurity in character, in feeling, in desire, in action.

Who, then, can fail to be charmed by the visible beauties and the essential righteousness of holiness? He who sees nothing in it to admire; who feels no attraction from its moral power; who does not feel the force of its intrinsic loveliness, is not a Christian. It is impossible; nay, it argues a depth of corruption, and a degree of moral stupidity and death, most fearful and perilous, to be incapable of evident, inward delight, at the contemplation of holiness, and of spiritual desire to grasp it

as a prize. One of the first effects of pardon and regeneration, is an inward consciousness of delight in purity; and the more thoroughly we know ourselves, the more fully we understand the depths of our own native depravity; and the more we increase in the light and power of experimental piety, the more devoutly do we love holiness for its own sake, the more ardently do we pant to possess it. If it conferred no other benefit than itself —if there were no other blessing in it, yet, with the strongest emphasis could we say, it is desirable to be holy.

2. The Results of Holiness are Desirable. These are matters of experience. They can never be appreciated without experience. We begin to realize them at conversion when the work of holiness begins. Happiness is felt which no tongue can describe, arising partly out of relief from the enormous burden of sin, from the deep consciousness of guilt, from a terrible sense of the wrath of God, from the awful fear of punishment—happiness produced in part by the contrast which the soul feels between a state of pardon and a state of condemnation. But, besides all this, there are the beginnings of a new and spiritual life. The present manifest workings of the Holy Spirit upon the heart and the feeling of inward renovation are all suited to the constitution of the soul. Where the power of inward depravity is broken, and the feelings, motives, and will are brought into harmony with the will of God, inward comfort and joy are the natural results. And there is happiness in faith; for we are formed to believe;—to trust implicitly in God; and the manifestation of a Redeemer, suits precisely this propensity to confide in a power able to support and

to ransom us. This is the rest of the soul. In unbelief, it is "like the troubled sea," agitated, weary, away from home, incapable of repose. In faith, the soul is at home, and must be happy. And there is happiness in love. We were made to love. The malevolence of sin is its principal virus. No man can be happy with a consciousness of hate within him. Hatred to God, to man, even to an enemy, will make the noblest soul upon earth the home of wretchedness. Love harmonizes with a sense of duty—with the primary fundamental laws of the soul; and he who first feels the gentle, sweet, subduing power of love can hardly fail to rejoice. To all really converted we may say, "Whom [Jesus] having not seen ye love. In whom, though now ye see him not yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And then there is bliss imparted—direct, rich beyond description, from the resident God within the converted soul, bliss which is designed to increase forever.

But what Christian does not know that this inward joy meets with sad interruptions from the rising power of inward depravity? This, it cannot be denied, disturbs the moral harmony upon which happiness depends, renders it irregular and uncertain in proportion to its amount and force. And to give permanence and certainty to the bliss of conversion, it must be totally removed. If it were to be always kept under, if as a source of temptation it were never to gain the mastery, the enjoyments of the soul, great as they are, would be far less than in a state of perfect purity. If salvation in part—if the beginnings of sanctification are capable of producing so much substantial joy, how much more may

be realized when the work is complete? This is clear from *a priori* evidence, but experience must destroy every vestige of doubt. The deep, pervading, elevating and abiding joy in the state of entire sanctification is known, is matter of fact which both really and comparatively shows how desirable it is to be holy.

But the moral power it imparts, greatly strengthens the argument. The power to glorify God is fearfully impaired by indwelling sin. The sad accusations of conscience, of history, and of revelation against believers, are in evidence of this. Sin utterly destroyed—the soul athirst for God and swallowed up in his love, and the divine glory then rises above every other consideration in earth or heaven. With what clearness and force can the soul wholly cleansed, glorify God by reflecting his image, by presenting truthfully his power to save, by showing the divine reality—the superhuman strength of experimental godliness. How conclusively it refutes all cavil in regard to experimental religious verities, silences infidelity, and dissipates fear by the indubitable evidence of fact which all men can see, and no man dispute. This is bringing glory to God by confounding his enemies, by demonstrating his claims and illustrating his living power to save the lost—a style of logic which transcends all the dictations of scholasticism, and leaves nothing to desire. And how potent is the arm which is thus held out to the feeble in virtue! What encouragement to the halting and despairing! The living demonstration of the power of grace lifts up the head that was bowed down to the dust, and the sweet, inspiring language of love invites the timid forward in the way to heaven, with a charm which multi-

tudes are unable to resist. The work of God strengthens and revives; sinners are saved by scores and hundreds, by the living power of perfect love. We have but to suppose the whole church completely redeemed, and burning with love that casts out fear, to have some idea of the power in this experience to promote the glory of God. Who doubts—who can doubt that the aggressive energy of the church would then be in a high sense irresistible, and that the earth would soon "be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea?" The results of holiness! They can never be shown by rhetoric or logic. They cannot be appreciated without trial. We must feel the power of full salvation to know it. We must prove it when we are called to grapple with the monster death;—must enjoy it in the thrill of delight which heaven will bring to the enraptured soul;—must see it in the glory that beams from the Triune God in that bright world;—must hear it in the songs and hallelujahs of redeemed ones, and angels, and seraphs, where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are forever at rest." Desirable! Ah! if it be desirable to be relieved from all fear—to be elevated to a state of calm and permanent bliss—to be able to glorify God even in the fire—to be ready for death without a moment's warning—to live with God forever, it is desirble to be holy. We thus see as clearly as we may with the light allowed us, one grand claim of the central idea of Christianity.

SEC. II. IT IS POSSIBLE TO BE HOLY.

FIRST: SHOWN FROM A PRIORI PROBABILITIES.

We have endeavored to show that it is desirable to be holy. We trust that this conviction has been deepened in the minds of some who have read. We are certain that little can be done without it. If a believer can see no charms in holiness,—nothing to be desired in a clean heart—in being wholly the Lord's—in perfect love, there can be no hope that he will endeavor to obtain it. He will not dwell upon it in his thoughts,—will not study it in the revealed will of God,—will not plead for it in his prayers. But it is manifestly improper to speak of a believer who sees nothing desirable in holiness. A man who can say, "I have no desire to be holy," cannot be a true experimental believer in Christ. The smallest degree of justifying, saving faith brings this charming state to the view of the soul, begins within the gracious work of cleansing, and gives an enjoyment so infinitely transcending every other, that delight in holiness and a desire to obtain it in greater measure, must be identical with a state of pardon. Terrible as is the necessity, he who does not desire to be holy, must, if he would not be self-deceived, regard himself as "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity." But there are doubtless degrees of Christian desire; and it is not merely an ordinary desire for purity which will arouse the soul and excite to the right action. We have sought to exhibit the intrinsic and practical excellence of this great blessing in such strong and varied light as

to stimulate this desire and make it the absorbing and permanent feeling of the soul. May we not ask you to look it over again and again, see its loveliness contrasted with all impurity,—thank God when you see its charms and feel the power of its attractions, and, by earnest devout meditation, reading and prayer, strive to increase this desire? Let nothing divert you. Let no device of Satan deceive you. Your safety here and hereafter depends upon it.

We now present the encouraging fact that it is possible to be holy. If the desire exist, if it be strong, increasing, absorbing, then we can conceive of nothing more pertinent, more probable and pressing, than the question, is it possible? Can it be? A worm—a sinner—such a sinner as I! True, I have been pardoned! My Savior has shown me unexampled mercy! He has made me an heir of eternal life! And every day I am compelled to confess my heart wanderings, and my offences before him, and humbly beg and receive his forgiveness! But then I am so unworthy,—I am so frail and erring,—so fallible in every thing, is it possible that I can be saved from these infirmities? No, surely. You have mistaken the question. It is not of infirmities that we speak,—not of frailty and fallibility! These are hereditary effects of the fall—of ancestral and personal crimes; and they are now constitutional. They may, perhaps, be partially remedied. They may be, in part or in whole, antagonized by gracious gifts. Deliverance from them is not the possibility contemplated. But your inward corruptions—the sources of those unholy thoughts and feelings, desires, motives, and purposes, which you have so often felt, and which have so fre-

quently manifested themselves in wrong words and actions, which explain your oft-returning listlessness, forgetfulness of God,—dulness in devotion, levity, and worldly tendencies; which have so often grieved the Holy Spirit, wounded the Savior and exposed you to the reproaches of conscience, the hisses of sinners and devils, and to guilty apostasy! These—ah, these inward corruptions! Can you be saved from these, so as to be really "pure in heart,"—really dead to self and dead to the world, its charms and follies, its riches and pleasures; really, all alive unto God,—with a faith that takes him at his word, that asks and receives, and that triumphs in the flames,—a love that absorbs the whole soul in God and makes his will your own? Can this be done? Ah, yes, you answer. This is the question. This is what I wish to know. I have so long felt the bitterness of these dregs of sin; I have so often felt the risings of carnal nature; my peace has been so frequently and sadly interrupted, all my services for my Heavenly Master have been so seriously marred, and I have, in just this way, been so grievously deceived and exposed to actual sin, that I have again and again almost despaired of salvation. I have thought, and examined, and wept, and prayed, and wondered if there was no method of relief—no inward, radical, thorough, and permanent cure, for these fearful maladies.

We feel bound to answer, there surely is. We thank God for the clearest practicable evidence that we may be saved from all sin in this life. But for the present let us suppose that the opposite is true—that sin may be pardoned, but not cleansed from the soul,—that we may even increase by slow and imperceptible degrees in our

power over it, and yet never reach entire deliverance from it! Let us look at the theology of this position and see whether it can by possibility be true. If so, it must be for some reasons found in the nature of God,—in the plan of the remedial dispensation,—in the nature of man, or in the interests of the converted sinner.

1. If the reasons are in the nature of God, they must relate either to his ability or willingness. And shall we assert a doctrine which limits the divine power to save? No, we cannot, we dare not. He made the soul, and can change, or even annihilate it at pleasure, or he is not the Almighty. If, as it should, the question relate to the moral and official ability of the divine Savior, then it is answered in his own words, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth." No person of sound mind could therefore assert the inability of God to cleanse us from all sin in this life, and probably no one could be found formally to assert it, and yet we are greatly in error if there is not really in the church a vast amount of concealed infidelity just at this point. Have not you, reader, detected yourself in saying,—it cannot be done—not for me; it is impossible that I should become a perfect Christian? Let me beseech you never more to think thus unworthily of God your Maker, your Redeemer. At least, let this point be settled for ever. He can—he has the power—there are no limits to his power, none to his sovereign prerogatives. And is not this a point of exceeding importance? Does it not throw a new and glorious light upon your soul—to admit it—to believe it fully, unreservedly to believe it? O, what gratitude arises within you for this one triumph! Maintain it by grace divine, by humble, holy, fervent

prayer, by rising, struggling faith. Maintain it against the wiles of the devil, the suggestions of your own heart, and the cavils of opposers. There is power in Christ to cleanse from all sin.

If entire salvation from sin in this life be impossible, for reasons found in the nature of God, as they cannot relate to his power, they must to his will. And how, we ask, does the intimation appear when fully expressed? God has the power to cleanse us entirely; but he is not disposed to do it! He prefers that inward corruption should remain in those he intends to save! He loves sin more than holiness! Alas! This is blasphemy; and yet who can claim that it is not God's will, that it is not his choice, his divine preference, to remove all corruption from the hearts of his people, without asserting it? No, this cannot be true. From the infinite holiness of his nature, he abhors all sin—not any particular form of it merely, but every conceivable form, because it is sin, and he cannot prefer it to holiness. The argument from his infinite love is perfectly conclusive. With all the affection of a benevolent father, he yearns over us, and longs to see us washed and saved completely from this ruinous defilement. Yes, he is more than willing. He is anxious. He has entered upon the most stupendous system of exertion for the accomplishment of this very purpose. Think, we beseech you, of any wrong which you find in yourself—of the least remaining depravity, and then think of the purity of God, and the efforts of his love to purify you, and see if you can say, or for a moment entertain the idea, that he is not willing to deliver you from it. No sane mind can do it. Another point of great import-

ance is gained. Lay hold of it by a faith that will never yield. "It is the will of God even your sanctification," in the highest, fullest sense. In God, there is no barrier to the progress of this work to its entire completion. What feelings of soul does this truth originate? Are you not dissolved in humble, adoring gratitude, as you entertain it; and as putting the two great facts together you exclaim, "God is able and willing to deliver me from all unrighteousness?"

2. But can we find this impossibility in the nature of the remedial dispensation? That is, while the power and the will which our entire deliverance requires, reside infinitely in the divine nature, is the scheme of redemption such as to be of necessity only partial here? Are the provisions in their own nature defective either in efficiency, or in adjustment to the divine will? This would surely be an unworthy view of the wisdom of God—of the efficacy of Christ's blood, and of the power of the Holy Ghost. Is it possible to conceive, strictly speaking, of a scheme of salvation that is partly, and only partly efficacious—that can relieve us from a portion—a large portion—nearly all indeed, of our sins, but not from the whole of them? What is required to save a soul in any sense,—from any part of its sins? Most evidently, satisfaction to divine justice, a full, a perfect atonement, and an actual influence of divine efficiency; and can any thing more than this be demanded for the utmost salvation? To begin the work in its lowest degree, requires infinite love—infinite atoning merit—infinite efficiency, and this is all we claim, all we want for the work of entire salvation. No, there is no impossibility in the scheme itself. If it can save

from a single sin, it can save from all — if from the highest, it can from the lowest degree of impurity, and if from the vilest forms of iniquity, as in the first work of mercy in a sinner's heart, it can from the less enormous remains of the carnal mind. Let this point also rest, in the clearness and strength of your faith. The plan is no partial one; it is worthy of God. It is adjusted to the whole necessity. To attempt to limit it, is to destroy it, and this you will never do. You will rather rejoice in the clear assurance that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;"—that there is actually no want of your nature which is not provided for.

3. And must we stop to inquire whether, in the nature of man, there is any necessary obstacle to the full triumph of Christ in the soul? It seems hardly required, for who would say that corruption is so deep that it cannot be equalled by the atoning blood; that the stains of sin are so dark and indelible that they cannot be washed away; that such is the obscurity, the unworthiness, the weakness, the nothingness, of a poor, weeping, pleading believer, as that no power, no efficacy can prevail to make him pure? True, there may be an insuperable difficulty in man. He may decline the cleansing blood. He may refuse the saving operations of the Holy Ghost. His will may not harmonize with the will of God, and hence, though Christ is fully able and willing, yea anxious, to cleanse him entirely, it will not be done. But it is not of such a case that we are speaking. Suppose, rather, the spirit to be entirely yielding; to loathe utterly, and renounce forever, its inward depravity; to make, in the best manner possible

to its graciously aided powers, an entire consecration of itself to God forever; to throw itself without reserve upon the merits of Christ for a full salvation, believing this moment that the blood is sufficient—that it can save to the uttermost—that it will and does now save from all indwelling sin; then, under these circumstances, is there any thing in the nature of sin, or in the enfeebled and undeserving condition of the human soul, that must and will inevitably prevent the completion of the work? No, we cannot admit it. If it were to be accomplished by human power, then the resistance would be too strong—the work too great; but it is God who says, "Come, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool—though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow." It is the blood of Jesus and not human merit. Then,

"My flesh which cries—it cannot be,
Shall silence keep before the Lord,
And earth, and hell, and sin shall flee,
At Jesus' everlasting word."

4. And as to the interests of the converted soul, there can be no question. These are surely all on the side of entire salvation. No fact is more painfully evident, to the consciousness of the devout Christian, than that his remaining corruptions mar his peace, interrupt his growth in grace, and weaken the power of his faith, and his religious efforts in behalf of others. No moral necessity can be found in ourselves—in what it is lawful or expedient for us to do, in what we can rationally hope to enjoy, or what, in this life or the next, we can reasonably dread, for our retaining aught of our inward sins. The argument is all on the other side. We are

hastening to the world of retribution, where all our interests are in a world of immaculate purity. Could we but know the power of holiness to bless, our longing hearts would pant for it, until we could realize it in all its fulness.

Designedly deferring for the moment, the great divine scriptural argument, we have thus found abundant *a priori* reasons for claiming that the power and will of God—the plan of salvation by Christ, and the nature and interests of man all combine and harmonize in the position, that it is possible to be delivered from all sin in this life.

SECOND: THE POSSIBILITY OF HOLINESS SHOWN FROM SCRIPTURE.

Jehovah speaks! Listen, O my soul! It is the voice of command. The authority of my Sovereign is in it. Let me bow before it with awe and reverence—with filial confidence and love.

1. Let us examine the divine command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." It is righteous, beyond all question. But is not this in some way an accommodated command—applicable to ancient Israel, and relating to ceremonial purity? No, for it is repeated in the New Testament, and with all the solemnity of imperative law, to the Christian church. This is conceded. But is it not a kind of holiness which can coexist with the remains of carnal nature? Really it is not. There is no way of escape. "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." This then is Heaven's order, not that we should be gods,

or even angels, but men; purified men, holy men; so God ordains.

Let us then pause a little, for humble, sincere reflection. Would God utter impracticable orders? True, orders which were at one time practicable may be impracticable at another. For we may wickedly dispose of our ability to obey, and this will by no means discharge us from the obligation, but rather greatly increase the guilt. Such was doubtless the condition of our first parents. But would he repeat the order to fallen beings under a dispensation of remedy, amid the condemnations of the law, and the rich provisions of the gospel, with no purpose but to tantalize us? Would he teach us that it is still his will that we should be holy—would he absolutely require it of us, and repeat the command in such a variety of forms as to preclude the possibility of mistake, yet knowing himself, and fully intending that no such thing could be possible? We cannot entertain a thought so unworthy of the God we adore. No. Let us look into that firm command, not merely with submission, but with hope. He who knows all my sins, who understands all my weakness and unworthiness, he commands me to "be holy." He from whom all my help must come—he who knows that I can do nothing of myself, that in him alone I have redemption—he commands me to "be holy." Then it must be possible. He to whom all things are light, who can see the end from the beginning, must have discovered some way to accomplish it. He has found out a ransom, he knows a cleansing power that is equal to the work, or he would never have spoken to my poor soul, saying, "Be ye holy." Dark as it may be before me, impossible as it

may seem to cleanse one so impure as I, yet "with God all things are possible." And even in the case of a poor worm of earth, "all things are possible to him that believeth."

Let me then no longer doubt, so long as the command is on record, and I am compelled to believe it is spoken to me, I must,—I will believe that it is possible for even me to be holy.

2. But Jehovah speaks again! Let me hear the words he utters. And will he now condemn me utterly for my helplessness? Is there no relief for this agonized heart?—agonized because so sensibly impure. O, my heavenly Father, speak not to me in thy wrath, lest I sink to hopeless woe. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." This is the soul of compassion,—a voice of love, tender, holy love. "Ye shall be clean." O what could I ask more? This is the burning desire of my heart. I see these stains, these deep inward stains. Every day they seem darker to me. I cannot bear them. I turn away from them and loathe myself on account of them. And now, I hear the omnipotent God say, "Ye shall be clean." But let me not prematurely rejoice. This is an ancient saying. It was addressed to some who were in need of cleansing, but have long since passed away. May I claim that promise? This much I dare to think. Sin is always in nature the same. If for one a complete ransom is found, I think it must be applicable to all. It was under an old dispensation, and even then it was possible to cleanse God's people, to make them "clean"—"from all their filthiness, and from all their idols to cleanse them." It

must be possible, or so glorious a promise would not have been made. And if an ancient child of God might be cleansed, may not I? There is encouragement in this word, that lifts up my heart. But what does my Savior say? I want the question settled—settled for my own soul. I hunger and thirst. O, let me hear my own Savior's voice. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Filled!" O, my Savior, this is what my soul desires. I have felt a void, a deficiency. I have been sweetly happy in a sense of pardon, in the blessings of salvation from the guilt of sin; but still I have longed for the fulness. I would have no part of my soul's capacity unoccupied for the use of the world, or the flesh, or the devil. I would be filled with God, "with all the fulness of God." And now listen, O, my panting spirit. Hear the voice of him who "spake as never man spake." "They shall be filled!" This is a divine assurance, and it shall support my faith.

But pardon my urgent inquiry. This thorough cleansing, this completion of holiness, cannot be the work of human power.

Let me see the provision which meets my craving wants. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "The blood of Jesus!" This is the only plea for sinners. This is a finished revelation upon the subject. For there are no limits to the power of this "blood." It was designed to cover the whole ground, to make the whole, the sufficient, the only satisfaction which the law requires, the only remedy of which our fallen natures admit.

What reason have I to fix any limits to its power? What peculiarity of my own depravity is excluded? Why should I admit that the atonement is complete for others and not for myself—for a part of my sins and not for the whole—for some period of time, and not for the present? And if there is power in the blood of Christ to cleanse me from all sin, it must surely be possible to be holy, for me to be holy, and stand complete in all the will of God.

3. And it is sweet to remember that inspired men have prayed for the accomplishment of this work in the hearts of believers. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." How bold is the request! How confident! Not the petition of doubt or fear—not based upon the supposition that it is a blessing to be desired, but not with expectation. It is not as much as to say, "It is to be regretted that you remain sanctified only in part. It would be glorious, if the thing were possible, for you to be sanctified wholly. If I were not fearful that it is not in accordance with the divine will, I would really ask for you the blessing of entire sanctification." No. There is nothing doubtful, no hesitancy here. Promptly, boldly, reliably, I pray "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly." It is not said, I would ask this blessing for you, were I not fearful that if you were to experience it, you would soon lose it again; if I was sure there was any method of preserving you in this exalted state. No such halting. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and preserve you blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And then,

that nothing might be wanting to ensure confidence and inspire faith, he adds, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Once more the evidence is complete. And, with humble gratitude, I assure my trembling heart, that it is possible for me to be holy in this present life.

4. This triumph over human depravity has been already achieved in numberless instances; but, if only in one, that of itself must be conclusive. Take two passages of holy writ, one from the Old Testament, and the other from the New. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." There must of course have been a "perfect man" to "mark,"—some holy man, whose soul had been purified from its defilement, and who had become so sweet in his temper, so heavenly-minded, so full of burning love and zeal for God, that all the people knew him. It was safe to refer to him, to point him out as a model man; and derive from his exemplary life and peaceful death, the most convincing argument in favor of the same consecration, and the most powerful inducements to make it, thoroughly, and at once. Nay, it was not one man alone. So many there surely were, that any man could see them. They stood out so distinctly before the world, as the grand monuments of redemption, that David could call upon all, distant as they were from each other, to take notice of such men; to see how "perfect" they were in character, how "upright" in life, and with what "peace" they could die! This perfection, uprightness, and peace were attainable then, for men secured them, and lived as bright and burning lights in the midst of darkness.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." So said the adorable Savior; and who would wish to say there are not—there never has been—there never can be, any "pure in heart" on earth? Why did not the disciples say, "Lord, where are the pure in heart? We have never seen any! All the human beings we know are more or less corrupt! And if none but the 'pure in heart' can 'see God,' then, alas! no one can see him; for there are none 'pure in heart.'" Had they said this, they must have received a rebuke similar to that which followed the exclamation, "Lord, who then can be saved?" "With God, all things are possible," even to get a rich man ready for heaven. No. It would have been just as appropriate to have said, "There are no poor in spirit,"—there are no "meek,"—there are none who "hunger and thirst after righteousness,"—none who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake," as to have said there are no "pure in heart." All these beatitudes are connected with actual conditions upon earth. There may have been none of either class in the group around the person of the Savior; but if not, they were elsewhere. If not there, they would be somewhere in the world, to pass through all these varied states; and the "pure in heart," should "see God," should be wrapped in the visions of the Infinite, by faith on earth, and without a dimming veil in glory.

But let us be still more special. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." This is the moral state which we affirm to be possible. To have the soul so completely purified as that there will be no rebellion in it, no setting up of rival authority

nor of selfish, worldly plans, conflicting with those of the omniscient Jehovah; so completely subdued and renovated as to come into immediate and uninterrupted harmony with the mind of God—to agree with God—in feelings, views, purposes, efforts, and will—"walk with God,"—elevated to the fellowship of God—to the society of God; to enjoy the unspeakable honor of his company in the highway of holiness, "cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in." All who are thus purified will not be taken by a miracle directly to heaven, but he who went up without seeing death must have been holy before his ascension. Yes, other men had gone away from God—deserted, abandoned, opposed him! Yet others had gone to him—had been with him for a time—at different times; but "Enoch walked with God." They had become—let us speak it with reverence—bosom companions. They were not equals. Surely not; infinity was between them. They were not equals, but "friends!" "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death." He had, however, before this triumph, "walked with God" for many happy years!

Abraham, "the father of the faithful,"—what a finished, sanctified character did he attain! He was quite imperfect, when he began to obey God. He showed his need of entire sanctification in many instances; but his "faith" waxed stronger and stronger, until he became at last like gold tried in the fire. Read his history, watch the struggles of his giant intellect with the dim visions of glory passing before him in the revelations of God; and the triumph of his spirit, now calm, settled, strong, and living in the very atmosphere of

heaven, on Mount Moriah, where the word of God was law, not to a soul of mean and cowardly submission for fear of a greater evil—law to a soul that mounted upon the pinions of a towering faith—that left all earthly affections below the sphere of moral sublimity to which he had ascended.

Job was "a perfect and an upright man, that feared God, and eschewed evil," not merely in the sunshine of prosperity. So deeply was his mind imbued with the spirit of loyalty, so thoroughly had he been purified from the earthliness of the carnal mind, and so profound was his knowledge of the ways of the Almighty, that no calamity could move him from his integrity. His property was swept away, his children were taken from him, his body was reduced to a mass of corruption, his friends and his bosom companion turned violently against him, yet, "in all this, Job sinned not with his lips, neither charged God foolishly." Splendid specimen of holiness on earth—tried in the fire, and come forth as gold!

And you have not forgotten "Zechariah and Elizabeth," who "walked in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless;" unlike many of us—delighted with some of the divine ordinances—ready to yield most promptly and gladly to those which harmonize with what seems our present good and future safety, but most anxious to avoid those which are crossing to the flesh, and humbling to human pride. Thank God, some have been so completely baptized into the spirit of obedience as to "walk," from holy choice, "in all the ordinances of God blameless." Who shall say it is not possible?

But we must not forget the sainted Paul, whose proud,

rebellious heart was humbled by a stroke of divine power, who rose from one degree of grace to another, was "changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord," until at length he could say, "I am ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." Ah, this was triumph. "I am ready!" Death has no terrors. "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain." "I am ready!" This is the state we affirm to be possible. How could we do otherwise without rejecting history, and despising the facts of revelation?

But "time would fail us" to speak distinctly of these shining examples of entire sanctification. We long to dwell at length upon the experience of the beloved disciple, whose soul was love—pure, hallowed, perfect love; melting, shining, burning brightly, in the glowing language of inspiration. He wrote of "perfect love." He spoke of it with subduing tenderness. He dwelt in God, and God in him, the very thing that we claim to be possible.

And modern Christianity glows with examples as bright as any upon the sacred page. Remember the holy Wesley, the seraphic Fletcher, and his devout companion. Call to mind the sanctified Nelson and Carvosso, Hester Ann Rogers, and Lady Maxwell, the flaming Payson and covenanted Judson. Look into the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ even now, and see how many he has washed with his own blood until they are "cleansed from all unrighteousness," and tell me, can

there be any doubt that it is possible to be holy in this life.

Who, indeed, will pause to doubt, in view of the purity of heaven into which nothing unclean can ever enter, in view of the blood of Christ, which waits to cleanse,--of the baptism of fire, which awaits the believing, of the ransomed hosts who are ready to be offered, and the ransomed host who stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God in their hands? O, there is no doubt; it is clear as the sun shining in its strength; it can be done. The arrangements are all made; the provision is perfect; the sea rolls before us. Let us us step in and be clean. We have thus revealed, another grand claim of this central idea; it is possible to be holy.

SEC. III. IT IS NECESSARY TO BE HOLY.

FIRST: SHOWN FROM THE END OF MAN'S CREATION AND THE NATURE OF GOD.

MANY will admit that it is desirable, that it transcends in importance all other objects of interest to an immortal soul. They are convinced that it is possible; for they do not dare to limit the power of God, nor the efficacy of his remedies.

But they do not regard it as necessary,—as indispensable. They incline to resolve the whole into a question of expediency or convenience. And, as it is inconvenient to give thorough attention to it; inconvenient to part with many cherished worldly gratifications; inconvenient to be wholly and only Christians, they waive it, and think they have committed no wrong,

violated no law, run no risk! But we propose to show that entire deliverance from sin is not a mere question of convenience; that it is not left simply to our discretion; that it is a fixed, unalterable necessity; a matter of imperative obligation, demanding immediate attention—thorough and successful attention—such a necessity as that failure in relation to it must be finally fatal.

1. We argue, from the purpose of man's creation, and his primitive moral condition. It is certainly in harmony with Revelation, as well as the general sense of the church, to say, "The chief end of man" is, "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." But God is glorified by holiness alone. Sin interferes with his glory. It is the grand element and fact of rebellion in his universal empire. Wrong in itself, essentially and unalterably corrupt, it is against all his plans, and the occasion of all the disturbance in a government, designed to show the power of universal harmony in the right. Just in proportion to its extent, it prevents the glory which would accrue to the Divine Being in the reign of universal goodness, happiness, and progressive perfection. Conquered, held in check, and resisted as it is, in the justified state, it yet, however concealed and plausible, is an antagonist force that resists the spirit and plans of God, and loses no opportunity to seek and gain the ascendency. Only the heart entirely consecrated, from which sin is all excluded, which is wholly dissolved in love, can completely glorify God. Then all the ransomed powers flow sweetly in the channel of the divine requirements. God is glorified by the pure flame of love which is the essential element of his own

character and felicity. He is glorified by the exhibition, before earth and heaven, of the power of his remedial goodness, the efficacy of the Savior's blood, and the renovating force of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man. He is glorified by the pure, the steady, and increasing light which goes out from his consecrated ones upon the moral darkness of the world. He is glorified by the sweet, humble and convincing testimony of his witnesses. He is glorified by the moral power of experimental, practical holiness in rebuking sin, in resisting and diminishing the influence of the Prince of Darkness, by the inward redeeming agency for God, and truth, and heaven, which goes out in this world of sin, and by the trophies of grace brought home to the Redeemer in heaven.

Had sin been an element and condition of God's declarative glory, it would have been created at the first; and, had its production and continuance, however subjugated, been compatible with that glory, there had been no arrangements made for its destruction; no blood provided which "cleanseth from all sin." But, because it was directly and unchangeably otherwise, man was created "in the image of God," "in righteousness and true holiness," and, when this divine image was lost, was superseded by positive corruption, all the stupendous arrangements of the remedial dispensation were put forth to restore it. No; there can be no chance for mistake in the announcement; the glory of God requires our deliverance from all sin. This, the chief end of our creation, can never be fully realized without it.

2. We argue it from the nature of God. We cannot

fathom the depths of infinite purity. The heavenly orders cry before him who sits upon the throne, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." This is the nature we are to please. To this awful moral attribute we must be adjusted in character, affections, motives and will, if we reach the other object of our creation "to enjoy him forever." With this holy nature we are to be compared, not in its infinitude, but in its freedom from all defilement, and its unchangeable devotion to the good and the true. With this august, living purity, we are to be united. God proposes to dwell in us as his temple,—to "sup with us and we with him." How appropriately, then, are we required to "come out, and be separate; touch not, taste not, the unclean thing;" to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." In pity to our fallen condition, he begins his reign in us before "sin is all destroyed."

Partly that the completion of the work may depend upon faithfulness to the grace already given, and partly, perhaps, for reasons which we do not understand, he forms with us a spiritual union at the time of our conversion, notwithstanding our remaining depravity! But what, we ask, is the fair inference from that fact? That he means thus to hallow and legalize these remaining corruptions? That they are licensed to remain under the divine sanction, because our "bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Surely, directly otherwise. He enters, and will only consent to remain, as a conqueror; and though, in general, as in the direction to Israel, in relation to the Canaanites, these subjugated foes are

"driven out little by little," yet the expulsion must proceed, or, like those terrible foes, they will become "pricks in our eyes, and thorns in our sides."

Without a figure, if we, in our voluntary states, aim not against our remaining tendency to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,"—against them steadily, actively, energetically, so as to concede to them no willing, quiet home within our bosoms; if we indulge first a slight, and then a growing pleasure in their existence, and concede to them a voluntary gratification, we shall "defile the temple of God," and be exposed to the fearful penalty. "If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy."

What, now, we ask, will prepare us for the enjoyment of this spiritual union—for growing, and finally completed oneness with the divine nature? The wrongs that are within us are uneasy in this august presence. The risings of self, and the stirrings of depravity, are interruptions of the harmony which God seeks to produce within. They initiate, and, if granted license, perpetuate rebellion in the citadel, once reduced to subordination. It need not, then, be further argued.

The fact that we are to have all our happiness from "fellowship with the Father, and with his son, Jesus Christ," shows conclusively in the nature of God the necessity for holiness in men. Before his bar we are finally to appear, and the only grand question there will be one of completely restored harmony with the character of the Judge; harmony in moral condition; harmony in will, and motive, and labor; reached, and, (so far as opportunity has allowed,) enacted in previous probation. In fact, so intimately are we related to the

Divine Being, so utterly are we dependent upon him, so impossible is it to flee from his presence, and so completely do his own resources comprise every thing upon which our well being, in time and eternity, depends, that we must argue, from the nature of God, his rightful demands upon us. As verily as holiness is the attribute of Jehovah, it is necessary for us to be holy. With what appropriateness of authority and power does he say, "Be ye holy, for I am holy"!

He who cannot see, in the nature of God, the absolute necessity of purity in us, does not know God nor man. What drew from the prophet the exclamation, "Ah, Lord God, woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips?" He shall give the answer, "For mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts."

Let any one who doubts the necessity of deliverance from all sin, pause for a while before the awful purity of God, and receive upon his soul, and into its deepest recesses, the searching light that beams from his brow, and glances from his eye, and he will presently cry out, with the prophet, "Woe is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." How appropriate will then be the language of the poet:—

"I loathe myself when God I see,
And into nothing fall;
Content that thou exalted be,
And Christ be all in all."

Let him, then, we earnestly entreat, join with another, and say, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults;" and,

when this prayer is fully answered, he will know what it is to derive his richest happiness from the visions of God. He will fully appreciate the glorious beatitude pronounced by the Savior, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

SECOND: SHOWN FROM THE NATURE AND DEMANDS OF LAW AND THE WORK AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

1. We have further proofs from the nature and demands of God's law. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good;" and it can, hence, never be repealed or modified. It comes from a Being of immaculate purity, and cannot, therefore, include one unholy element, or assert one unrighteous claim. Its demands are based upon the principles of eternal and unchangeable rectitude, and adapted to man, not as he is, but as he ought to be. It is the rule with which every fact of his character and his life, must be compared—not a flexible, accommodating rule, suited to his ever-changing moral condition and capacity, but a rule of exact righteousness; and as soon might the immutable God change, as the law of rectitude, which is, and must be, a perfect expression of himself, in the relations implied.

Now, when we speak of this law, in reference to actual transgressions, we have no hesitancy in saying that it is strictly uncompromising. We expect no relief for a voluntary agent, who places himself against it. We find no opportunity for mercy, in the dispositions of the divine government, toward the wilful rebel. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified," because

the question raised is a question of fact, as well as of justice. The difference between the sinner and the law is an existing fact. It cannot be otherwise. No circumstances can render it non-existent, and the difference between the two things, compared, is an eternal difference. This shows, not what a man must do to be saved, but what the law is, and what it will be found, under any dispensation, whether of justice or mercy.

But will any one assert that the divine law has reference merely to the overt act? We presume not. Beyond all question, it relates to the passions, to the thoughts, to the purposes and motives, and, back of all these, to the moral condition whence they spring. This, in the first and strongest sense, is that "word of God, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That moral state, in which arise, even in the justified believer, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," is surely reached, and condemned by the law. It is wrong, essentially and unchangeably wrong, and no depths of the soul are beyond the penetrating light of God's holy law. The profound and concealed position of this remaining depravity, has no tendency to place it beyond the reach of divine recognition. And if it be not condemned as it is recognized, how is it wrong? How can remaining corruption be any thing else than perfect purity, if the law passes it by, or stamps it with approval? And when did the Divine Being intimate that his law had become so impaired in the vigor of its strength, and so tolerant

in its adjustments, as to pronounce no condemnation upon rising lust, which must instantly be put down; or springing pride, which must be resisted with firmness and success; or uprising covetousness, which, if indulged, is idolatry; merely because they were in a believer? To assert it would be gross antinomianism. No. This unsanctified moral condition is not less wrong, is not less sternly condemned by the law, because the soul in which it inheres is penitent and believing, and, therefore, pardoned. We do not, let it be again remarked, thus find, or seek to find, our remedy. But we assert the strict cognizance, and the unchangeable dominion of the law, which, though its condemnatory power does not extend to the agent, in his relations to atoning blood, yet reaches the moral elements within him, which render that atonement indispensable.

But it must not be forgotten that the reign of mercy will be over at some time future, that the mediatorial throne will be given up, and justice then will extend to persons, as well as to moral condition. In other words, we are to be judged by the law, the flaming law that "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Grant, that in this probationary state, remaining depravity can be pardoned, and yet remain, which we find to be the unquestionable fact of this remedial state; grant, that if he who feels the rising of self against God; of lust against purity; of pride against humility; of doubt against faith; of anger against pity; and fear against love; shall promptly check these wrongs, and so maintain and strengthen his hold on Christ, as that God, and purity, and humility, and faith, and pity, and love, shall have the ascendency, he will retain his acceptance with

God; though he shall not so believe as to be "cleansed from all sin," and enjoy complete deliverance from these evil tendencies; grant all this, as we cheerfully do, and assert it with humble gratitude, yet does it follow that this dispensation of forgiveness is to extend into another world? That the same unremedied tendencies may coexist eternally, with the approbation of the Judge, and the ineffable glories of heaven. It is impossible. The place of remedy is most unquestionably here, in a state of probation, where the means and appliances of the gospel are at hand, and in active operation, under the reign of mercy; and if the time of complete remedy be a continuous time, rather, than at first, instantaneous —if it does please our Heavenly Father to begin the work of purification, with the evident purpose of going on to complete it in future time, and to make that completion contingent upon faithfulness to the grace already given, and the exercise of a faith that fully appropriates the power of Jesus' blood to "cleanse from all sin," and even to make our continued justification depend upon our "going on to perfection," so that, at no single moment of our Christian life, can we, voluntarily, consent to "the carnal mind," without forfeiting the divine favor —if all this be true, as we grant and affirm, yet there surely must be a limit to this experimental period. The eternal contingency of our deliverance from inward depravity, would be a contradiction of terms, and, at all events, contrary to the doctrine of a final judgment, and of the ultimate reign of justice. Indeed, nothing is theologically more certain, and, we may add, nothing practically more important, than that this full salvation must, and should take place in this life. The scheme

of redemption is by no means obscure at this point. If it begins with the subjugation of our inward foes, it moves on to their complete extermination, and, in many instances, leaves time, before death, to "walk in all the ordinances of God, blameless," that he may show to the world his "peculiar people, zealous of good works," "not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." It is here, in this present world, amid a race of sinners, that, "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we, [God and man,] have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

As, therefore, it will be impossible, so, also, there will be no necessity that sin and reigning justice should co-exist in heaven. The divine plan is manifestly otherwise. But let not the stress of the law, in this argument, be ignored. Let not its strength be denied, as it can by no means be impaired. It is holy, and it demands holiness, —finished holiness, in the soul that must come under its reign, in a world of retribution. Unless, by some means, the law has lost its own unchangeable rectitude; unless the perfect happiness of the responsible agent, with yet remaining corruptions, has become possible in its burning presence; unless the day of probation is extended into another life, or the fires of purgatory are ordained for our purification in an intermediate state, the law of God renders it necessary that we should be cleansed from all sin in this life. Once more, let us be warned against the ensnaring power of this doctrine— of temporizing expediency. It is a fearful, and, (if not corrected,) must surely be a fatal error, to presume that attention to the doctrine of holiness is optional with us;

that we may, or may not, at pleasure, and with no responsibility, seek to be "cleansed from all unrighteousness." If the law of God has been preserved in all its severe and righteous integrity; if it extends to the remotest secrets of the heart, as well as to the outward life; if, in probation, it can only be held from consuming the agent with remaining pollutions, by the power of a faith that subjugates these corruptions, secures pardon for them, and moves the soul onward toward entire deliverance from them; if the state of forgiveness can be maintained only by "going on to perfection," before death shall terminate the trial state; and, if the Son of God will "deliver up the kingdom to the Father," and law assume its irresistible reign, then it is necessary to be "holy here;" and no Christian is at liberty to treat the central idea of Christianity as a matter of mere convenience. As sure as God's law exists in unimpaired force, thorough and practical experience of complete salvation is necessary, in this life, and so we shall find when we come to the judgment.

2. The mission and work of the church demand purity of heart and life. These were never better defined than in the words of the great Wesley—"to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." Hard indeed must it be to spread it, if we do not possess it. But let us not be misunderstood. We do not intend to teach that no progress in diffusing the blessings of the gospel can be made, but by the agency of the entirely sanctified. God's compassion has given to all grades of piety, their spheres of usefulness. There is an infinite fountain of holiness, which sends out its purest streams through divine revelation, through the grace of Christ,

and the power of the Holy Ghost, to water the moral desert of earth. Holy doctrines may be taught, inspired arguments and motives may be urged, and scriptural examples may be given, all of which have great force in themselves, and cannot fail to keep alive the remembrance of this gracious privilege, and to move on many precious souls in the way of its enjoyment. And the experience of Christians and Christian ministers who are sanctified only in part, but who so long for purity, and "grow in grace," as not to lose their justification, will give greater or less effect to their teachings. Under the sanction and influence of the divine Spirit they will show the way of salvation to sinners, and exert a perpetual influence towards making the world better. On no account would we in the slightest degree disparage this gracious work of God. We would join our beloved brethren in humble rejoicing, that "he will not break the bruised reed"—that the very least of us may do something to extend the glory of God in this dark world.

But we mean more than this by the mission and work of the church—by "spreading scriptural holiness over these lands."

This mission is a mission of light. To a fearful extent even yet, "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." To darkened human vision, the true object of worship is obscured, and even in Christian lands the true good is concealed amid the temptations of Satan, the corruptions of the heart, and the false glitter of this deceiving world. It is even yet true that the world by wisdom knows not God; and in the very centre of Christendom, as well as far out in heathen

lands, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." The rays of divine light must penetrate this moral gloom, and through the church, it is known, God shines upon the world. To illuminate the dark places, and dark hearts of earth, is her first grand commission. In her collective character God speaks to her in the language of authority: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

To his ministers he says, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Until these divine behests are obeyed in their true spirit and extent, darkness will still brood over the lands of sin and the hearts of corruption.

And there is light for the world in holiness. Even in its smallest beginnings, it reveals much of the darkness within and around us. But to keep up the figure, let the particles of corruption which float in its beams be taken away, and in its own intrinsic brightness it will shine out as the light of the world. With its own strength and intensity, it will reveal with fearful distinctness, the evils which were before unknown, show the obstructions to the march of the Redeemer's kingdom, before not suspected to exist, and with amazing force its rays will float off over land and sea, for the revealing of a world's corruptions, and miseries, and perils, and the work which demands with beseeching importunity, the hands, and hearts and revenues of the

church. Look at the history of the church, and see how, amid the purity of the apostolic age, her light rebuked the world, guided the humble penitent to the ways of peace, and smote the proud and haughty con temners of God with terrible judicial blindness. See her again in the fourth century, and amid that long, dark night of a thousand years, that settled on her like the pall of death, how she became "a hissing and a byword," amid the cursing myriads of Jew and Gentile sinners. Dark, dark, dark, for the want of that inward holiness which shines wherever it lives, and, when in its own intrinsic, unobscured light, beams with ineffable brightness upon the world. The church is seen at this day, but, it must be humiliatingly confessed, she is dimly seen by the nations. Their deeds are reproved, but, alas! too tamely and indefinitely reproved, by her superior purity. Let her take on the plenary baptism; let her dross be consumed, and her spirits brighten in the beams of God's own immediate and awful holiness; and she will no longer be obscure to the eyes of men. The guilty will writhe in anguish in her presence. The sins of the nations will call out in shame for some place of concealment, in the very agony of distress from the exposures of her light. Sweet and gracious attractions will draw all men to her, and she shall hail a world returning to the arms of maternal love.

Who shall say that this mission of the church can be accomplished without the holiness provided in the gospel? Let no one be deceived. The world is dark at this moment, because the church is impure. O, when shall the glad time arrive in which she shall in reality respond to her call from heaven: "Arise, shine, for thy

light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee?"

But the mission of the church is a mission of purification —"to spread scriptural holiness." We have attempted to show what scriptural holiness is. It need not be mistaken. Inwardly it is "a clean heart," with the affections regulated, and piously centring in God," it is what the apostle meant when he said: "I live, nevertheless not I, but Christ liveth in me;"—and, in its outward relations, this: "I am crucified to the world and the world unto me," and this, also: "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth;"—and socially this: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Such, in brief, and by inspired definition, is "scriptural holiness."

But there is deep-seated and pervading depravity in the hearts of men. And hence there is death—moral and spiritual death. Outward crime calls aloud to heaven for vengeance. Because of sin, and for no other cause whatever, man rises up against his fellow man, and blood follows the red right hand of mad ambition and revenge. The grand want of the world is purification—the "scriptural holiness" which we have defined. Why goes it out so feebly, so slowly, so superficially, and over so small an extent from us? Alas! it is because in us it is so limited, so mixed with natural defilement, with natural affections, and worldly fears and influences. This is all. No man can—no man need, add another reason. In its sin-consuming power, it does not glow and throb within us; it does not blaze out upon surrounding iniquity.

We want, instrumentally, to purify our families, our brothers, our neighbors, our fellow citizens, the "strangers that are within our gates," the teeming nations of earth. This is our mission. We are meant for the world's "leaven," and ought, long ere this, to have permeated the moral mass; but we make them no better than ourselves; nay, by no means so good, for, ever and anon, they deny what of piety we really have, upon the ground of our marked defects—our likeness to themselves.

How much reason have we to pray: "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name,"—"Cleanse thou me from secret faults!" Then with what calm and energizing confidence could we go out on a mission of cleansing! Would we but first "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," then, with what renovating, saving power should we move into the world! We should work, then, in healing the world's maladies, not merely under a divine commission, but with the force of a living example, and the full attendant energies of the Holy Ghost. For this, holiness is not merely desirable, but indispensable.

But we go, moreover, on a mission of love; of love that pities while it condemns;—love that yearns for the well-being of every individual of this vast and sinning race;—love that will not rest to enjoy alone its holy delights, but must diffuse them everywhere;—love that will not permit us to sit idly down in inglorious repose, and see the world enduring the miseries and perils of a sinful life—see immortal natures degraded in "worship-

ping the creature more than the Creator"—adoring self, and Mammon, and "the abominations" of the heathen—see generation after generation rising up to weep, and laugh, and curse, and die, moving off to the horrors of despair;—that will not—cannot see all this, without an effort, a struggle, an agony of prayer for the salvation of the world;—love that melts at the name of Jesus, and would declare it to the world—that fires at the visions of heaven, and would move the world to come up to its sublime and eternal joys.

But alas! our love is so cold! When shall we "love our neighbors as ourselves?" when shall we so love them as to be restless unless we are doing something to impart to them holiness instead of sin, happiness for misery, Christ for idols, Christian civilization for barbarism, life for death, heaven for hell? When shall we fully perform our mission of love? Not until we "love the Lord our God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind, and with all the strength, and our neighbors as ourselves."

The mission of the church is, finally, a mission of power; not, indeed, of civil, or political, or physical power, but of moral power;—of power to teach the doctrines of revelation authoritatively, to reveal the infinite wrong of sin, the eternal right of holiness, and the tremendous awards of eternity; power to call the world to a pause in its mad career, and sound the trump of judgment in the ears of crime; power to proclaim the terms of reconciliation and utter the note of jubilee to the nations; power to preach the conditions of salvation, and enforce them. But what power is this? Ah! it is the power of an indwelling Deity; it is the power

of the right, clearly exhibited, and felt, and so expressed as to make others feel. It is the power resident in the holy "gospel of Christ"—"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile."

But the amount of this power is the aggregate holiness—the experimental, practical religion of the church. She has gone so far and achieved so much, because she had so much of the power of "righteousness and true holiness." She has gone no further and done no more, because she has had no more. With a little more of the moral force of true goodness, she might have moved many of her number forward to full salvation who have remained "babes in Christ," "carried about by every wind of doctrine." With a little more of this inward power, she might have pressed warmly to her bosom many of her own baptized children, who have been overborne and carried away by the flood of worldliness and temptation. With a little more of the authority which belongs to the right, she might have commanded the love, and admiration and obedience of the world, where now she is left sad and solitary in her robes of widowhood and mourning. She has wanted power to call out and direct her own sympathies; power to command her own resources; power to send her men to the lands of suffering and death; power to arrest and awe the proud monarchs of crime, and secure their allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords; power to drive home the arrows of conviction which have sped from her bow; power to batter down the gates of hell, and move through the world a conqueror, as her sovereign right; power to infuse her-

self as an invisible, celestial animus into the civil and social systems of the world, and guide them in a career of greatness and blessing which is denied them because of their fearful impurities. But holiness would have given her this very power. By "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord," she would have been prepared and energized for this mission of power; and in no other way will she ever accomplish it.

Let us speak to you, dear brethren, with yet closer and more personal familiarity. Do you not feel that these things are so? Can you question them for a moment? Do you not humbly confess that you have yet the weakness of remaining sin in your heart? Does it not enfeeble your faith, cool your zeal, give formality to your prayers, restrict your benevolence, and, indeed, well-nigh paralyze all your Christian energies? Alas! that it should be so. It need not be so. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." The provision is made, and is ample. But let this imperative necessity come home to your hearts. Depend upon it, there is work for you to do which will never be done without holiness. You must have a spirit of sacrifice, of benevolence, of labor—hard, delving labor—which this alone will give you.

Let us say, with the utmost distinctness, there is preaching demanded which will never be done without holiness—preaching which, for clearness and point, for the depth and range of its sympathies, and the sacrifice and devotion of its missionary spirit, must exceed almost immeasurably the preaching which comes from the purest present piety of the church; preaching "in the

demonstration of the Spirit, and with power." There must be praying, there must be believing, there must be burden-bearing, there must be battling with sin, there must be a rushing out into the provinces of death which will be impossible without the special baptism, and a divinely sustained, elevated holiness in the church. In a word, it is necessary that the church should be cleansed to accomplish her mission of light, and purification, and love, and power to the world.

We have aimed to produce conviction in the minds of believers, and sought to present, clearly, warmly, and urgently, the three great facts: that it is desirable to be cleansed from all sin, it is possible, it is necessary. Is it really so? Have you a doubt? Which of these propositions would you reject? Read them over. Ponder them seriously, with your eye upon the judgment. There is then no resisting it. This is no work of mere convenience—no question of mere expediency. It is desirable, it is possible, it is necessary to be cleansed from all sin. What, then, will you do? With these convictions, you surely will not throw the question aside, or treat it lightly. Henceforth the subject of holiness will be to you matter of the gravest thought, and the most earnest examination. It will drive you to prayer, to the Bible, to the cross, to the blood that cleanseth. May it soon appear that you have given thorough practical heed to the claims which rise up so legitimately out of the central idea of Christianity.

CHAPTER V.

THE CENTRAL IDEA IN ITS COUNSELS.

SEC. I. THE CONVICTION PRODUCED.

The conclusions reached are such as must command attention. Holiness is not an outside or accidental appendage of Christianity. It is the very centre of it—the grand element of its power—the essential fact of its value; and yet, it is generally neglected, so that a large proportion of converted men are sanctified but in part, and the church comes very far short of accomplishing her mission. It is time for us to ask "what shall we do?" May we not assume that the reader has already determined that it is desirable to be holy—it is possible to be holy—it is necessary to be holy? The most anxious desire must then be to understand the way; and there is certainly no need of mistake. The central idea which has produced revelation has filled it with counsels which "he that runs may read," and which followed in the spirit of humble confidence, will surely lead us to the full realization of this glorious state.

But let us not be superficial. Whatever is valuable in religion must be grounded in conviction. The receptive intellect must take in the subject. If it disappear, memory must recall it, and attention detain it, for the

most careful examination. The reason must determine its truth, its importance and its claims. The heart must yield to its deep impressions, and the resolves of the soul must harmonize with the understanding.

Conviction is a law term. It implies that the accused has been arrested, tried, and condemned—brought in guilty of the crime alleged against him in the indictment.

But in theology, this term has a special sense. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, imparting to the soul positive evidence of its guilt, its depravity, and its exposures. "And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." So perverted is the natural conscience, that it cannot be relied upon, for accurate moral discriminations, for safe and decisive moral impulsions, or just and remedial retributions. Man left to himself, accumulates guilt, with no true estimate of its enormity, becomes harder and darker as crime increases, and "treasures up to himself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." The light of reason, or of philosophy shines too feebly to penetrate the gloom of his depravity.

But the spirit of God has the intelligence required for the revelation of the facts. His omniscient eye scans the minutest particulars of our history, and gazes into the profoundest depths of the soul. He can, therefore, certainly reveal to us the wrongs and the dangers which we have failed to see. Besides, it is not enough to know how our outward or inward sins appear to us. Our own view must in any event be superficial and entirely insufficient for the purposes of reform. We must know God's estimate of these wrongs; at least, so far as he

has made us capable of receiving divine communications, and is pleased to make them. To us, his decisions are of paramount importance, and nothing but these may be relied upon with safety. We may, therefore, be humbly grateful that full provision has been made for this necessity. "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." This very general and positive declaration is not made for any one class of men, nor intended to refer to any one fact of the moral state or relations. It presents us with the Holy Ghost as the great truth-telling agent to the souls of men. He, and he alone, knows the truth which men have occasion to ascertain. Just as no "man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God."

In a very important sense, the awakened sinner must therefore have "the witness of the Spirit" to the fact of his guilt, or the divine attestation to the light in which his sins are viewed, by the Being against whom they have been committed.

It is necessary in this discussion to distinguish between the conviction of an unpardoned sinner, and the conviction which must be felt by the inquirer after holiness. In the former instance, the soul is pained and oppressed with a sense of guilt. It is not merely the general knowledge of the fact that he is a sinner that distresses him. Of this he has always been aware. But now, from an agency out of himself, and to him invisible, he is deeply impressed with "the exceeding sinfulness of sin"—especially of his sins. The memory of his crimes against God is strangely quickened, and the examination is surprisingly minute and searching. He feels that he

is justly arraigned before the Sovereign he has offended, and all efforts at self-justification are utterly vain. So many hidden crimes are brought to light;—so overwhelming is his feeling of remorse, that he cries out in anguish, I am lost—I am sinking to perdition. "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" There is no relief from earth or heaven but in pardon. And the same spirit that leads the sinner into the truth of his guilt, must lead him into the further truth of his justification; for this is one of the "things of God" which no one knoweth but the Spirit of God.

We are thus particular in stating the phenomena of conviction in the case of the unpardoned, not only that the conviction due for "sin in believers," may be placed in its own distinct light, but that we may aid inquiring minds in avoiding a dangerous error in the character of experience. It must be of the highest importance for the reader to inquire whether there is guilt in his soul —whether he has been pardoned for the past, or has retained upon his conscience the crimes of a lifetime; or, having "known the way of righteousness, he has turned from the holy commandment delivered unto him," and so lives before God with the crime of apostasy unatoned and unforgiven. That the truth may be known, the Holy Ghost asking for entrance must be admitted. His divine illumination must reach the utmost extremities of the soul, and from the depths of his being this guilty one must repent of the wrongs he has committed. To him the question of pardon is first. His soul must be relieved of its guilt, and, alive from the dead, it must be brought into fellowship with the Father, and with his

Son Jesus Christ, before he will be in a condition to receive the profound convictions, and enter upon the holier work of seeking entire sanctification. Unpardoned guilt will obstruct the light, and bar the power which this completed work implies; and we cannot fail to urge upon all who would become "pure in heart," that they must first be justified by faith—must be born again. Many doubtless have sought, and sought in vain, for "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ," wondering why they did not receive it, when the grand obstruction has been in some indulged offence which has brought unpardoned guilt upon their souls. And many others have been seeking for higher attainments—received a great blessing, and supposed it to be entire sanctification; when in fact they were only reclaimed from apostasy, or newly born from above. Hence, early doubts arising from the recognition of inward depravity, from which they had believed themselves entirely saved. Hence, also, premature professions and inconsistent living, which bring the work of holiness into discredit before the church and the world. Let us urge upon all to mark carefully the nature of their convictions. Do they refer to offences voluntarily committed? Are they the evidence of allowed "unrighteousness," or of "knowing to do good, and doing it not?" or of "a transgression of the law?" If so, let the deepest repentance and the clearest justifying faith become the first concern of the soul. And when "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," then let us invite and give heed to the convictions which are necessary to the completion of the work of purification so auspiciously begun.

It is important, however, to observe that it is not for the justification of delay, but to prevent serious mistake, that we make this discrimination. We have already shown that no specified length of time can be required for the transition from the one state to the other. This must depend upon the clearness with which the subject is grasped and understood—upon the character and power of the faith exercised, and, we believe, to some extent, upon the previous experience of the individual; for, doubtless, one who has once believed to the justification or entire sanctification of the soul, better understands the process of faith than before he had such experience. However difficult it may be for such an one to yield, to determine, and to trust, he knows the way, and when the crisis is reached, may, by an act of faith, make a prompter and even more comprehensive claim upon the atoning blood, than would have been otherwise probable. We grant indeed, here, and elsewhere, that the transition from guilt to forgiveness, and from impurity to holiness, may, in rare instances of discriminating and appropriating faith, be so rapid as to be unnoticed by consciousness; and that, hence, some really do suddenly pass from a state of guilt into the full enjoyment of perfect purity. But the order of events is not the less real because unnoticed. It is well known that succession is often so rapid as to be unnoticeable at the time, and yet a critical analysis of the same subject, under circumstances more favorable for observation, will reveal the fact of succession. So we find it to be in the case under consideration. The seeming exceptions, have, therefore, no tendency to destroy the distinctive character of the great work of entire sanctification; and

yet they allow us to give all confidence to the candid testimony of those who have found themselves from the time of conversion in possession of "a clean heart," and of those who, after having received the blessing, have relapsed into their former state, and, in the absence of a clear justifying faith at first, have sought and obtained the renewed evidence of perfect love; only requiring in these, as in all other cases, that they "have their fruit unto holiness."

But there is a conviction for inward impurity—for "sin in believers," which is eminently the work of the Holy Spirit. Depravity of the heart, however subdued, cannot remain long concealed. Its first motions, as we have seen, are felt with surprise by the truly regenerated. They produce more or less of pain and exposure, but if promptly resisted, they do not bring a feeling of guilt upon the spirit trusting in Christ. Further experience, however, shows that the life of the Christian is to be almost a continual battle, not merely with outward foes, but with himself. The recognition of these inward wrongs will depend not only upon what they are, but upon the habit of attention to the state of the soul, and the degree of divine influence secured by the cooperation of the human agent. The truly devout man will, however, frequently find his attention silently but powerfully drawn to these inward impurities. Sometimes when, so far as his consciousness reports, no train of reflection has led to it;—in the midst of passing engagements, and of other thoughts, the conviction will flash upon him suddenly, and he will feel like hiding himself from the sight of men, burying his face in the dust, and crying out for deliverance. At other times this

sense of wrong tendencies assumes an amazing distinctness in the midst of spiritual exercises, and even of powerful outpourings of the Holy Spirit. This cannot be due to unprompted reason. Left merely to ourselves, we should sensibly or insensibly yield to the rising evil, and allow the conquest of the heart by its own subjugated foes. Whatever influence we may attribute to the associations of the hour, and to the habits of the life, they are not sufficient to account for the searching light that breaks in upon the soul, and the power which humbles it to the dust. The great reprover "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," is there in the faithfulness and authority of a God, performing the work for which he has appeared among men.

These convictions, let it be expressly stated, differ from those felt by the unpardoned sinner. They are convictions of inward depravity, and not of guilt; they are connected with felt aversion to the impurity recognized, and a conscious dependence upon the Savior's merits for gracious acceptance; they produce pain, but not condemnation; they are not unfrequently strongest in the midst of fervent spirit-pleadings for gracious influence, and increase with the advance of the soul in its longings after God, and in the elements of a higher Christian life.

We are aware that the evidence of these positions is chiefly that of experience; but we claim that it is perfectly decisive. We have never yet conversed with a Christian man or woman, whose experience did not confirm every position here taken. And so perfectly do these positions accord with the special revelations of the Bible, repeatedly quoted in this volume, and with the

humble lamentations of good men recorded in the Scriptures, that we regard them as settled facts which no man can safely deny.

But it may be asked, if these convictions are the work of the Holy Spirit, how are they dependent upon us, and what counsels in relation to them are suggested by the central idea of Christianity? To this it must be answered, God has arranged that in this, as in all other instances, the essential freedom of man shall be recognized. The Holy Spirit enlightens, arouses and guides the soul directly, but the power and effects of these divine influences, will depend upon the voluntary condition and bearing of the mind addressed.

1. Would you avail yourself of divine teachings? You must entertain the subject, and candidly seek to know the truth. Your views of theology, and your habits of mind may have been entirely opposed to the special consideration of holiness. The very name has produced in your mind a strange aversion, and such has been your dread of the responsibilities involved in efforts to be saved from all sin, that you have shrunk from them, and repelled the convictions which you have felt. Thus God's Spirit has been grieved, and you have lost the benefits of those gracious influences which he proposed to vouchsafe to your necessities. Alas! my brother, you have deeply wronged your own soul. You now see that the words you have rejected are the very "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Is it not to be regretted that the blindness of your education, or of your own indulged habits of mind, has led you to reject the chosen language of inspiration, for the inculcation of the richest truths of the gospel scheme, while these sacred

words—"pure in heart,"—"be ye holy,"—"sanctify you wholly,"—"be ye therefore perfect,"—"perfect love casteth out fear,"—with innumerable others, have been laden with blessings for you? What untold privileges have you thus unconsciously rejected. Nay, but a better understanding, and a truer, profounder humility, would have led you to say, these are God's own words. They are better than mine, I will receive and study them with filial docility. I will search for their utmost scope and power, and the higher and holier the privilege they reveal for me—for the church of God, the more delighted and humbly thankful I shall be. You will come to this at last. This determined preference of human to divine wisdom, has long enough robbed you of your richest privileges. It is full of wrong and danger. It has sent myriads to hell, and but for the amazing goodness of the being you have slighted—of the Savior, whose power you have limited, and of the Holy Ghost, whose proffered purifying work you have feared to allow, it had long since ruined you. Turn then, we beseech you, your thoughts and studies in the direction of holiness, and fear not the rich, the ennobling grace of full salvation now again proffered to you. Again, we beseech you, examine your heart with the profoundest sincerity. Nay, shrink not from the revelations unfolded to your view. Submit to know the worst. Whatever the pain—whatever the loathing produced by the discovery of the facts, still invite this discovery. Secure it by every means in your power. We entreat you to think—to read the holy Bible—to read the books which speak clearly upon this great theme—to study the whole system of redemption, in the light

of that holiness which we have found at its centre, and we are well assured that there will then be no want of conviction. You will know—you will feel in every part of your being, that you are deeply depraved—that you cannot remain so—that you must be holy, or wrong your own soul, and wrong your Savior whose blood is freely offered to cleanse you from all sin.

2. But most emphatically and earnestly do we entreat you, "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Pray—O pray that he will deign to come to your aid. Invite him as your friend—your welcome guest. Beseech him to increase the light which reveals the defects of your Christian state, and to uncover to your view the most secret wrongs within you. Invite even the anguish, if need be, of the most humiliating self-exposures, and shrink not from the rod of correction, which shall drive you to the bosom of your only protector. Need you again be reminded, how far beneath your privilege you have lived—how numerous have been the evidences of your internal depravity—how frequent have been your failures to honor God, and advance the interests of his cause? Prayer—humble, believing, mighty prayer—prayer from your heart—prayer as you walk the streets—prayer with your brethren, and especially prayer in the closet — long-continued, inquiring, struggling prayer, will help you to know yourself better — will bring the special grace of God to your aid. Let nothing discourage you. In darkness, in coldness, in hardness, if it must be, pray until the subduing melting grace shall be given.

3. Your conviction, to be available, must not be

superficial—must not be the merely ordinary impression, with occasional increase, that you are not what you ought to be. It must be profound, penetrating, and abiding, or you will never make it the starting-point of successful effort to obtain purity of heart and life.

One thing you surely feel; that your efforts at reform have been heretofore quite too superficial. You have again and again marvelled at your failures. One particular and another, known, perhaps, only to yourself and to God, you have determined to change. One reform after another you have resolved, in the strength of grace, to make—have thought they really were made, but have been amazed almost directly, to detect the same things returning, and find to your grief that you were the same man as before. Your mistake is an obvious one. You have been trying to purify the streams, but have neglected the fountain. The grand source of impure thoughts, and words, and actions, has remained within you unremedied, and thus you have struggled on. Your religion has been a religion of victories over "the flesh," as well as the world, and the devil. Are you convinced at last that this is all unnecessary—that the fountain may be cleansed, and the streams become pure? Are you convicted by the Holy Spirit, by the word of God, by your own enlightened conscience, that entire salvation is not only your high privilege, but your indispensable duty? Then with humble confidence advance. You have only to act upon these convictions, and the most gracious results will follow.

SEC. II. THE RESOLUTION FORMED.

You have often resolved to live a better life. Your failures have grieved and alarmed you. You have said it is strange that I should know the way so well; see in it so much of beauty and righteousness, and yet not walk in it steadily and rapidly. I will begin anew. I will reconsecrate myself to God, and henceforth my walk and conversation shall show that I am a true Christian. Then, it is likely you have poured out your soul in prayer. God has been pleased with the sincerity with which you have entertained the thoughts and purposes of duty he himself has suggested. He has seen the true spirit of loyalty to him, and faith in his Son, in which you have bowed and asked his blessing, and he has granted it. With humble gratitude you remember the many instances in which you have been melted down before the Lord, and baptized with his love.

The great fact, however, has perplexed and distressed you, that these improvements were quite too temporary. Why, you have been ready to ask, is there no more strength in my resolutions? Why must my evils of heart, and the necessity for repentance and conquests over myself, return upon me so frequently?

It is presumed, that, after all your experience, your self-examination, your prayers, your reading in the Bible and other excellent books, you have at last no doubt as to the true explanation of these failures; that you are now fully convinced that the evil is within you, and that

a profound conviction from the Holy Spirit of inward impurity, of the necessity of holiness, has taken possession of your soul. What now will you do?

Nothing is of moral force which has not the sanction of the will. Your own free spirit must act. Your purpose must be fixed under a high sense of right, and a longing desire to be pure in heart. Why should you delay? Is not the evidence conclusive? Have not all your delays been injurious to you? Have you not deprived yourself of much pure enjoyment, the church of much efficient labor, by putting off, from time to time, the work of entire dedication to the service of God? In many particulars, have you not failed to glorify him as you would have done, with a heart glowing with perfect love? How long shall this halting continue? In the name of Christ, we beseech you to end it.

Do you ask what shall be the character of the resolve now to be made? We answer not merely a resolution to reform, though it is inclusive of this. To resolve to live near to God, to be more thoughtful, more devout, more guarded in spirit, in word, and in action, is a high duty, and you will never in this life, be beyond it. To resolve upon a reconsecration of yourself to God, and to seek a deeper work of grace will be all well, and what you have done, and will have occasion to do times without number; but your experience shows that this does not reach the case. Some profounder remedy is demanded than any you have thus found.

But, do you say, I am resolved to be henceforth entirely a Christian? I have long enough endured the evil of a divided life. I have tried to meet the claims of God, and yet I have failed to separate myself wholly

from worldly influences. I see the wrong, I feel it more deeply than words can express. To be wholly the Lord's—to be a Christian in every thing—to be prepared to glorify God at all times in life or in death, seems now the most desirable of all privileges on earth. I am determined that this shall be my future course. For such a noble purpose we humbly join with you to thank Almighty God, who has given you grace to form it. But we have one thing more to suggest. Let your resolution relate to your inner being—to the very source of your thoughts, your affections, your life. Nay, resolve directly and explicitly that you will seek for holiness of heart; that nothing but this shall satisfy you. Several things are essential to this resolution.

1. It must be grounded in conviction. Of this we have written at length. We trust you have felt its truth—that it has aided you in inviting the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, by which this conviction has been produced. Without it your resolution will be feeble and temporary—little more indeed, than a mere impulse. Many excellent resolves have been formed under the influence of temporary excitement, or the special pleadings of a friend, or even the force of arguments which you did not know how to resist, and hence felt forced to yield your assent, against some of your strongest inclinations. These resolutions were right in themselves, and in some degree influential over your subsequent lives, and yet they fell short of their object. They had not the strength, the power, the reliable durability which your condition and wants demanded. But thorough conviction of inward depravity and of the need of entire sanctification, wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost,

will remedy this defect. Let there be no failure now. Have you a doubt that your inward impurities have been the sources of your trouble? Has God fully shown you these secret wrongs, so that you now know what must be done to render your life a holy life—a life of perfect love? Has that conviction gone through and through you, so that you have no doubt as to the complete remedy—the full salvation you need, and are entitled to receive through the merits of Christ? Has the conviction become more than a matter of feeling with you? Has it become a fact, a deep-seated pervading fact of your being, so that you do not find it trembling, hesitating, and yielding after a few hours of trial? Is it present yet? Does every effort of prayer, and examination, and faith strengthen it? Then you have reliable ground for the resolution to seek for holiness until you obtain it. Your convictions will make such a resolution as is now due, possible—will give it soundness and force, —will move on with it to sustain it and increase its power.

2. But carefully observe that this resolution is not made in your own strength. Poor human nature has no strength for such a purpose. How often have your most solemn vows failed, for no other reason than some secret reliance upon your own power. But, now let this error also be remedied. You have no strength of your own. You see this more clearly than before. You are nothing; God is all. The Holy Spirit can sustain you in the purpose to seek for a pure heart, until you obtain it. Think now in earnest sincerity;—are you satisfied that divine power alone can support you? Do you feel that you may trust that power without the least reserve? Fix your whole soul upon the Almighty

Spirit, until you see and feel that he is given for you; that he has come to accomplish the work of cleansing for you; that in the unlimited power of God he is with you, to be might in your weakness, and to uphold you in this struggle. Now, make the resolution. With every energy, of intellect and heart, confiding in the strength of the Holy Ghost, venture to say, I will seek for holiness until I obtain it. Why should you fear? This resolution is in harmony with God's will—with the teaching of the Bible—with the whole plan of redemption. It is just the point to which you have been urged for many months, and probably years. God invites you, he urges you, he pleads with you. Surely you will not refuse. Then is the resolution formed?

3. There must be no mental reservation. Did you think, as you were settling the question, I will make an effort—I will see whether it is for me—I will try the theory by an experiment? Alas! then you have been deceived by your enemy. Do you not see how marked is the evidence of unbelief in all this? Is it, then, only a resolution to ascertain whether God is true or false? Do you propose to debate the promises of the gospel, and to proceed only upon conditions that you shall find them reliable? No. This would be a fearful responsibility. We trust you are fully apprized of its wrong, and its danger. This alone would account for the failure of your effort. The resolution, to be successful, must be based upon the absolute unchangeable veracity of God—upon the unquestioned integrity of the promises, upon the positive certainty that the blood of Jesus can cleanse from all sin, and that it can, and will cleanse you, so soon as you take the right position in regard to it.

4. Another caution suffer us to suggest. An attempt to prescribe your own states of mind before and after this work is wrought, and the manner in which it is to be effected, will mislead you. Should you say, as you make the resolve, I must advance in a particular manner, or continue a long time in this effort to seek for holiness, you would be liable to disappointment and discouragement at every step. The methods of divine grace upon the souls of men are various. Characters differ;—some feel more deeply, some think more profoundly; some have dulness and some liveliness of soul. "There are diversities of operations, but the same spirit." The manner in which you will be affected is not, therefore, a question submitted to yourself; you may have some power over it, but you ought to have as little as possible; at least, include nothing of this in your resolution; leave it all with God. The resolution must be absolutely without condition;—simply and purely a resolution, made in the strength of grace to seek for perfect love, in the use of all the means God has appointed, according to your best ability, until you gain the blessing. To say beforehand it cannot be done now;—I must agonize and pray for days, or weeks;—at least there must be some delay in the matter; is to limit God,—is to assume to judge beyond your light; nay, in opposition to your light; for all this deferring and selection of times, is surely against the word of God. True, there may be a delay, but the reason will be in you, not in God. All we mean here, is, that the time, whether longer or shorter, is to make no difference with your resolution. It is a resolve to seek until you obtain, and especially to seek now. Is this your resolution?

5. Finally, the resolution must be made with a full purpose to accept all the requirements of God's word. Some of them may be crossing to your nature; some may be difficult for you, with your habits of life, to meet. You may feel the shrinkings of the flesh, while the spirit is willing, and yet every cross must be borne, every trial endured, every apparent danger braved. The thing you have undertaken is, to obtain a clean heart, to be in soul, body, and spirit, wholly the Lord's. This rises in dignity and importance above every thing else, and must be preferred to every thing else. Every sacrifice required for the fulfilment of the revealed condition must be considered a privilege for the sake of the object, for the honor of Christ, for the glory of God. But be not alarmed; as we proceed to develop the work before you, you will be delighted to see how right, how perfectly in accordance with your sense of duty every particular of it is. You will feel an agreeable surprise at the perfect simplicity of the way; and as you proceed to take one step after another, you will see difficulties vanish, and the most dreaded crosses turn into the most grateful privileges.

We trust we may now consider it settled that you have advanced with us through the second stage of this great experience;—that you have formed the resolution, grounded in conviction;—formed it in the strength of God, with no mental reservations, and with simple purpose to accept all the requirements of God's word,—to seek for perfect love until you obtain it. A noble triumph is this! May God help you to maintain it against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

SEC. III. THE FEELING NECESSARY.

A hard heart is unfriendly to the purpose you have determined, by the grace of God, to execute. Indeed, in the strictest sense, it is guilt, and is associated with impenitence and wrath. Hence, the language of inspiration to the wicked, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Such guilty hardness we by no means attribute to you; and yet, there is a state of the heart which does not harmonize with the determination to seek for entire sanctification.

The intellect is not unfrequently in advance of the sensibilities in this great work. Strong arguments against sin, even all in-dwelling sin, are not wanting to the reflecting mind. They are suggested with more or less frequency and power, as the days and nights pass on. The reason of a converted man is perpetually suggesting to him that he ought to go further. Consciousness of inward corruption nearly simultaneous with the evidence of pardon, strikes him as a lamentable and unnecessary antagonism within him. His enlightened conscience brings his inconsistencies strongly to his view. The memory brings back unnumbered instances of unfaithfulness, growing out of remaining wrong tendencies of the soul, and sound judgment condemns the

state out of which they arise. The Holy Spirit pours divine light upon the facts and the arguments, and urges on to the conclusion that there is need of a further cleansing. The conviction takes strong hold of the intellect, and hence the high resolution in its greatest propriety and strength may be formed to seek for holiness, while the heart is not in precisely the state which promotes, and invites the realization of the object. Who does not know this? How many times have you said, O, that I could feel as I ought to feel! If I were broken down before the Lord, if my whole soul were melted in his presence, then I should be capable of higher spiritual exercises, I could receive more readily and permanently the divine impress.

It is necessary, however, to guard a point here. No certain standard of feeling can be fixed which all must reach, or never be filled with perfect love. Doubtless this is a question with which constitutional temperament has much to do. With some, feeling is excessive under powerful conviction, and needs rather to be checked than excited, in order to calm reflection and permanent consecration. Some who feel most deeply, make little outward demonstration of feeling, and might even suppose themselves to be wanting in conviction, when, really, their whole souls are roused, and unalterably fixed on the glorious prize, and they may be carried forward through the most vigorous efforts of faith with no bursting emotion. We should commit an error, therefore, to compare ourselves with others, or to predetermine precisely what amount of feeling we must have, before we can realize the great blessing. Indeed, we are free to admit that too much dependence may be

placed upon the mere matter of feeling—so much as to make room for a very ruinous temptation. Many, we doubt not, have even thought it a sufficient excuse for making no effort to obtain the blessing, that they had not so much feeling as others manifested, and their arch enemy has, perhaps, for years induced them to wait for the feeling they have judged to be necessary to make the effort successful. Let this snare be broken. The duty is a present and pressing one, and nothing should be plead as an apology for delaying the work which, under the divine blessing, depends upon your volitions.

But there is a high sense in which the heart is involved in this great work, and we think we may reach an exposition of this fact which will relieve a difficulty, and greatly aid those who, in judgment, are soundly convinced that without holiness, they cannot see the Lord.

The idea that just as you are, in any state of feeling, under the convictions of the intellect, and the resolves of the will, you can meet the conditions of entire sanctification, is monstrous, and is repudiated by all sound teaching upon this subject. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Most sincere seekers of holiness feel that they can do little in the effort until they have true tenderness of heart. Their devotions, their attempts at the exercise of the faith that purifies, are too cold, too mechanical; and they regret it, they mourn over it. They need a breaking up of soul, a soft and impressible state of the heart, fully prepared to receive the stamp of the divine image. They must be all alive to the work they propose to do, and the blessing they expect to receive.

It may be said, a devout Christian is always in a state of sensibility;—never cold, or dull, and doubtless there is a degree of tender susceptibility which is implied in the justified state; but that all feel as much and as deeply as they ought, and that the true Christian is at all times in a state of feeling that is most friendly to high religious efforts, is not according to fact. Indeed we lay it down as a matter of experience, that the heart has need of melting, subduing grace, before it can be capable of the exercises which must precede entire sanctification. So the sound and growing Christian feels, and, we believe, will generally affirm.

It is, then, a question of grave importance, how is the right feeling to be acquired? How may we obtain such tenderness of spirit, as will enable us to receive the stamp of God's image?

1. Our strong and general answer is, prayer. We deem it legitimate for the seeker of holiness to ask God directly for "a broken and a contrite heart." He alone can grant the peculiar influences which subdue the soul, and melt it to humble contrition. "He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than parents are to give good gifts to their children." Yes, more willing, for while theirs is a finite, his is an infinite love, and with the yearnings of an infinite heart, he longs to give his children all that their wants require. The Holy Spirit melts the heart; and it is this very gift that your heavenly Father is so willing to bestow upon you. But your will must accord with his. He will hold you to the conditions. "Ask and ye shall receive." You may rely upon it. His promise is "yea and amen to him that believeth." In the name of Jesus "ask

what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." You want this tenderness of soul; more than all the wealth of earth you desire the blessing of tears. Then ask for it humbly, believingly, perseveringly, in the name of Christ, and it shall be given you. Be assured that this gracious result is at the command of faith. How many hundred sinners have commenced to pray without conscious emotion, and been presently bathed in tears. How many, cold in religion, have been warmed and revived, in answer to prayer. How many in precisely your condition, with their intellects convinced, and their wills determined, but with a painful want of emotion, feeling that they would give the world for tears, have at length been all dissolved in answer to prayer. Then go to the fountain of melting tenderness and love, and plead with God, for Christ's sake, to give you the state of heart you require, to be able at once to receive the image of God.

2. In the midst of your praying, there is much that you can do, which will facilitate this result. Let memory be active now. Call to mind your past unfaithfulness,—your want of faith, of zeal and love. The view of these deficiencies will affect your heart. Remember your Savior's dying love;—how much he has suffered for you; how graciously he pardoned you at the first; how amazingly he has sympathized with you in your infirmities, and in your sore temptations; how many times he has delivered you out of the hand of your enemy, and how often and richly he has blessed you in spite of all your unworthiness, and you will be sure to feel. Look into the holy Bible; read the penitential psalms; read the weeping prophet; read the words of

the suffering Jesus; mingle all with fervent breathings after the melting power of God's Holy Spirit. You shall not complain of a want of tears. The fountain of the great deep will be broken up, and then what a view you will have of yourself. What discoveries of your inward pollution, of your entire unworthiness, of your helplessness before the Lord. How utterly will you then abhor your vanity and unholy ambition. How empty will the proffers of the world appear to you. You will feel yourself sinking lower and lower in your own eyes, until all self-consequence is utterly gone.

O, how sweet this subduing, melting grace! How humbling, how profitable to our naturally proud and rebellious spirits! We must have it. No cold reasonings, no independent purpose, no resolution to believe, no forced exertions will suffice in the stead of it. And there are none who may not have it. May the prayers you are even now urging before the throne, be speedily answered in this gracious special gift.

SEC. IV. THE CONFESSION REQUIRED.

We must suggest that this conviction for holiness and resolution to obtain it, can in no case be made a secret. Not, that this or any other religious exercise is to be a matter for ostentatious publication. Certainly, far otherwise. To proclaim it merely that it may be known, would illy comport with that deep humility which you are bound to cultivate. We wonder not that you feel no disposition to attract attention, or make a vain show of your effort to obtain the higher religious life. Your

felt unworthiness—the chastisements of your Heavenly Father—your bowing down of spirit before the Lord are all against it. In deepest self-abasement, were it possible, you would shrink from the sight of men, and bury yourself in the dust. This is all as it should be. You are now fast acquiring just views of your own nothingness. Self, that once adored idol, is sinking in your own eyes. Let it go down to the deepest self-abasement. God only knows how often and how perilously it has risen and strengthened itself into rivalry with your meek and holy Savior. Would that this might be the last of its unhallowed usurpations.

And yet you must be consistent. God will not allow you to be one thing to your own consciousness, and another in the reasonable apprehensions of others. You may not inwardly reckon yourself a seeker of entire salvation, and outwardly appear to be content with the ordinary Christian state. You cannot ask God to look upon you as a determined seeker of holiness, and ask your brethren to look upon you as having no peculiar convictions, or purposes, or feelings in regard to this great question. No duplicity can be allowed here or elsewhere. Honestly, just what you are, you must be willing to be considered. Nay, so entirely averse should you be, to becoming a party to any false impressions, in regard to your views of yourself and your humble resolve to seek the blessing of holiness, that you will feel inwardly urged to inform your friends that you feel the need of a clean heart—that you are panting after God as the hart panteth after the water-brooks—that you have felt yourself arrested by a divine invisible power, and shut up to a life of

simple faith—of completed holiness, and perfect love; that you have heard the call of God ringing through your soul with the solemnity of the trump of judgment, and yet with the gladness of the notes of jubilee; and you have accepted the call, reluctantly indeed, and after, far too long delay, and yet, at last, freely, fully, and understandingly. Humbly ask your Christian brethren to help you in the execution of your solemn covenant—to accompany you in the effort, and seek for themselves the blessed assurance that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin.

1. There is an involuntary expression of this important covenant. If it be genuine, it will be difficult to conceal it. The deepening solemnity of your spirit will appear in your countenance. Your restless breathings after God will be audible and intelligible to the church. Your groanings and strugglings to be set free may be too mighty to be suppressed, and your rising power of faith and prayer—your serene delight and holy rapture, as a growing, conquering, justified Christian, rapidly alternating, and even mingling with your efforts to seek for holiness, will be noticeable, without your intention, and even beyond your desire. These are speaking convictions and triumphs, which can by no means be concealed.

2. And yet, when the opportunity offers, there is distinctly something for the lips to utter. In the presence of those who know whereof you affirm, whose prayers you seek, and whose counsels must aid you, fail not to own that you feel the need of cleansing—that you believe provision has been made by your adorable Savior to cleanse you, and that you have covenanted to give your-

self up to this work, and seek in the scriptural way until you obtain the blessing. How could you, even practically, deny this without grieving the Holy Spirit, and bringing upon your soul the guilt of falsehood? What reason have you for concealing on earth the facts which make heaven ring with joy? Surely, none.

But you will find some stubborn difficulties in your way. There are some unavoidable implications in the confessions you are called upon to make, that will be deeply humbling to the soul. You have probably been long known and recognized as a Christian—perhaps a faithful fervent Christian; you may have been a leader in the armies of Israel—a minister in the church of God,—even an eminent minister among your brethren. In either case, it is not quite easy to confess that you have been all this time without a pure heart—that your religion has been a religion of contests with yourself, as well as the world and Satan, and that, though you have advocated for years a religion of purity, you have never yet fully availed yourself of the purifying provisions of the gospel. You dread to confess it, and yet is it not true? Do not God, and angels, and men know it well? and why should you seek to conceal it? Confess, we beseech you, to your brethren near you, that they may be induced to do the same, and so together you will fulfil the holy Scripture, "Confess your faults one to another that you may be healed." Conceal nothing that candor or righteousness demands. Have you felt the risings of self, of anger, of pride, of an unholy ambition for distinction, for wealth, or power? in the the name of God acknowledge it. An honest, truth-telling spirit is of the greatest possible importance to you. We refer

not to minute details;—these are not due except to individuals whom you may have injured, and to whom you owe reparation; and this, it is presumed, you have not knowingly withheld, or you would have lost your justification. Nor is it upon any principle of penance, or self-mortification, or with any view to priestly absolution, that confession is required. The grand principle of this whole concession is truth; truth to the conscience; truth to the facts of the present and the past; truth to the convictions of the soul by the Holy Spirit; truth to the vows you have made, and to the demands of the church; all of which requires, and must have, candid expression; and you will be gratified, you will be thankful to God for the benefits it confers.

3. When you have distinctly and meekly avowed your convictions and resolutions, you will be surprised at the relief it will bring to your soul. It will be like the falling off of a burden. You will hear a silent whisper within you saying, this is right. I have long owed this clear acknowledgment to my brethren, to my own sense of propriety, and I thank God for enabling me to make it. You will feel humbled in the dust, as you conclude it, but you will feel a sweet sense of the divine approbation, and a blessing that no language can describe.

4. Besides, there is much in being committed to what is right. This is a principle that extends through all the relations of man to God, and to his fellows. We are formed with a constitutional love of consistency. We do not wish to be known as faithless to our word. We shrink from violated integrity with instinctive dread. God avails himself of this important fact, in his holy

covenant, and in his whole system of religious vows. Certainly no one will presume that a reckless, trifling method of making pledges of any kind, is authorized by Scripture, or suggested here. Indeed, it is no formal promise to others to which we refer. It is the firm and willing disclosure of solemn facts and pledges already made to God, that we urge, and the moral force of the principles of religious honor with which we sustain it. We know all this may be forgotten, and disregarded in the future, but we claim that commitment to the right is the law of God; and the moral power of the principle involved, is of the highest practical moment in this important struggle.

5. It will moreover secure a strong sympathy for you, and the most fervent prayers from those who love you. You will feel the power of this collateral support. It will sustain your resolution mightily, and the richness of the blessings called down in answer to united intercessions, from faithful believing ones, will more than compensate you for the cross you have borne.

True, there may be unbelievers in your presence. You will not seek to overtax their confidence in the words and manner of your confession. You will, of course, prefer to avoid it. But should any of the select circle usually present amid such solemnities as these, turn coolly and incredulously away,—should the spirit of resistance to the doctrine and experience of holiness be avowed,—should cavil and criticism follow, instead of united longings and prayers for a clean heart; and even cold neglect or stern opposition appear, you have nevertheless done right in avowing the truth, and you are gathering more and more the power of holy love

with which to conquer, not for yourself, but for your master.

A little resistance will do you no harm. You may be all the more thorough and evangelical on the account of it. Your warfare is by no means ended, and is never to be ended on earth. Only the opposition of yourself is to cease. You seek, and with the highest warrant from God your Savior, to be wholly on the side of right, and this, it may not be concealed, will have no tendency to destroy the opposition from without.

Regret not, therefore, the candid avowal, though it may have brought you into severe trials. It will probably be your humble privilege to find, in another world, and even here, that confession has roused many slumbering consciences, brought many beloved disciples into "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace," and added many stars to the crown of your rejoicing. Will you make the confession?

SECTION V. THE CONSECRATION MADE.

May we assume that the reader has felt the conviction, formed the resolution, received the melting divine influence, and made the confession, which we have ventured to suggest? Another point of great practical importance must now be introduced. Consecration is literally "the act, or ceremony of separating from a common to a sacred use." We have already introduced it as a law of sanctification, and mentioned humility as its test. But it is here introduced as a thing to be done It is for you to make the consecration which your deter-

mination to seek for holiness requires. Your soul must be separated from all carnal, worldly use, and formally set apart as the exclusive property of God. Your powers of intelligence, reason, imagination, feeling, will, must be solemnly dedicated to the service of Almighty God. Your affections are henceforth to belong only to him who made the power to love. Your body is to be given up as "the temple of the Holy Ghost," and never to be "defiled." Your talents, natural and acquired, are to be reckoned henceforth wholly his. Your property in part, and in whole, is to be held subject to the divine will. Your dearest loved ones must be no longer yours, but God's. Yourself, and your all, must be without reserve consecrated to the Lord for time and eternity; for he is to be your only object of adoration. He is to reign alone within your heart. Absorbed in the contemplation of his divine excellence;—devoted to the execution of his holy will,—seeking and recognizing the labor he has authorized, and the spirit in which he wishes every thing done; rejecting every thing, whether of honor, or pleasure, or profit, which is not for his glory; your life in all the future is to flow out in the channels of divine love.

1. Can you do this? You fear you cannot. You really cannot if your own power alone is to be brought into exercise. But shrink not from the effort—look not now into the future, confine yourself to the present. The question is not now what will you do—what can you do before you die—next year, or even the next moment; but at this present time can you—will you hand all over to God. Think carefully. If you had property in your hands that belonged to another, could you

not hand it over to him, and in such a way as to consider it henceforth in every sense entirely his? You say, Certainly I could do this, and would do it at once. God forbid that I should claim any thing that does not belong to me. But here is a fundamental principle of the consecration you are now called upon to make, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." It has been an error to conceive of yourself and your possessions as your own. Of this you have been long aware, and you have been gradually coming to the light, until you have at length discovered that all rivalry of God within you, is not only to be conquered but totally eradicated. This you now understand. You know whose these powers and possessions are; will you promptly and unreservedly hand them over to him? We mean not that you can, as a natural act, make this consecration to God with the same ease, and in the same manner, as you could restore the goods belonging to another. We seek only to illustrate the right, and the practicability of the duty. There are acknowledged difficulties in the way of the one not in the way of the other. Your remaining selfishness is in the form of depravity which resists with cruel obstinacy this last and unrestricted effort to destroy it; and the arch enemy who would have nothing to object to the payment of an honest debt, because objection would be hopeless, will exhaust all his skill and power to prevent this entire surrender to God. And then, there is the force of a long established and habitual error in the conception of every thing as of right belonging to you, and you may not easily break the snare, and make the

entire consecration. Besides, this is a good act which you are called upon to do,—a religious act; and you are well aware that you can by no means do a good act, or speak a good word, without the grace of God in Christ Jesus preventing you,—going before, preparing the way and powerfully aiding you. It is not, therefore, after the manner of a mere ordinary business transaction that you can make this consecration. And yet, surely, you can make it. You are entreated to make it, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies [yourselves] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." There can, therefore, be nothing impossible in it. Indeed, nothing can be easier, if you do it by the grace of God, by the aid of the Holy Spirit. If you say, in so many words, and from the undisguised sincerity of your heart, I will, by thy help, O, my Savior, give up all to thee forever, you will be graciously aided,—you will be able to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

2. And what will you lose—what will you really sacrifice? You must renounce the world; and do you not feel called to this? We mean not that you are to go out of the world,—not that you are to resign any of its lawful pleasures. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein;" but he has placed us here to honor him in its appropriation. It must therefore be acknowledged his, as it really is. No man is allowed a more delightful use of the precious gifts of God, temporal and spiritual, than he who is wholly consecrated. It is a sanctified use—a use which recognizes all the claims of God in behalf of his church

and the world;—reserves his portion for his special service, with a conceded claim on all the rest, for whatever the exigencies of religion may require;—wastes nothing—uses nothing in needless self-indulgence, and uses that which is wanted for present purposes, as much as the portion given, for the glory of God. All this you feel to be delightfully true in its strongest sense, and it is in perfect harmony with this that you are ordered, "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." And in a yet broader sense, you are entreated, "be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Here is the evidence of your duty; what will you do with it? The help is at your command. O lift up your heart to God for the needed aid, and,

> "Strong in the sense which God supplies,
> Through his eternal Son,"

renounce the world—its carnal pleasures—its honors—its wealth forever.

3. As you repeat the vows of your baptism now, with a deeper, holier significance than ever before, saying, "I renounce them all," does not God know you are sincere? that you now make this renunciation understandingly to include everything? Then is it not really done? As you feel yourself sinking humbly down at the Savior's feet, and say again, I renounce them, do you not see them retiring? and can you regret them? Surely you cannot. How fearfully have they deceived you! Riches have prom-

ised you happiness, but bitterly disappointed you; let them go. Honor has been to you a bubble, and never redeemed one of its promises; let it go. Pleasure has been to you like the fair but bitter apple of Sodom; let it go. Your worldly associations have been but the scene of your unhallowed dissipation, and the precursor of darkness and despair; let them go. See these visions of your torture—of your severest troubles, as they retire! Would you call them back? No. Let them go. You part with them without a pang. All—all is gone but your Savior, and you are alone with him. Nothing else is left for you in earth or heaven. And is not he enough? "In him all fulness dwells." Shut up to him, and him alone, are you not entirely safe? There rest your weary spirit.

SEC. VI. THE FAITH EXERCISED.

You have now reached a point in which the question of faith is of paramount importance. You have renounced all dependence upon self; all trust in an arm of flesh. You have seen one after another of your earthly supports fail. You dare not trust again, anything less than infinite power. You would not recall one worldly dependence which you have renounced. To you, there is now absolutely but one hope, one confidence left, and you need no other. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Pause humbly, silently, before the crucified. You have now but one all-absorbing desire—to be "cleansed from all sin,"—to be fully prepared to glorify God and enjoy him forever. See, now, the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth

from all sin. How entirely efficacious,—how completely it meets the demands of the law,—how fully it pays your debt,—how sovereign the remedy. Dare you trust it? Nay, dare you do otherwise? You do trust it now;—you depend upon it for pardon, for acceptance; why not for salvation from all inward defilement?

1. You long for the fulness, and "in him all fulness dwells." Gaze for a while into that noble, throbbing heart. For you it beats with infinite love. You cannot,—do not doubt his love. He suffered for you. He grappled with death for you. He rose from the tomb leading captive your captivity. How kindly he bore with you in your rebellion! With what compassion he lifted you up, and embraced you when you came all guilty and trembling, and fell at his feet. How he blest you—forgave all your sins, and made you his child, his heir to all his blood had purchased! Can you doubt?

2. Call some precious Scripture to your aid. This, for instance, "For we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." "Touched with the feeling of our infirmities!" Is is possible? The sympathy of Jesus! A revealed, a glorious fact.

You are in a condition to need sympathy. How great your infirmities. How deeply you have felt them. How weak and erring at every step, and how fearful that you should some time fall to rise no more. How many efforts to reform have you made and found yourself failing in the midst of them. How often in the morning have

you risen, and on your knees covenanted that every moment of the day should be the Lord's, but when the night has come, with what feelings of regret have you bowed to seek forgiveness for your unholy tempers, your unguarded levity, your worldly desires, your want of devotion, or your idleness in your Master's vineyard! How strangely feeble when you ought to have been strong—how timid and doubting when you should have triumphed in the power of living faith. Yes, you have needed sympathy, and need it still. There you lie at the foot of the cross "weaker than a bruised reed." What can you do?

Christ is qualified to sympathize with you. He is a man; he is your weeping, sympathizing brother; he is a tried man; he has passed through every fiery ordeal. Remember the mountain and the forty days. Remember Gethsemane, the bar of Pilate and Calvary. He is a triumphant man. "Yet without sin." What a volume of meaning—what a comprehensive theology in these few words! He encountered the foe, and he conquered—conquered for you. See him on Tabor, with "his garments white and glistering." See him rising from the sepulchre;—stand with him upon Olivet, and see him ascending! for you "he ascended up on high—he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Here is triumph—here is victory—victory for you.

The sympathy of Jesus is no mere name. It is an available sympathy. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." "The throne" is the seat and the emblem of royalty. Grace is enthroned, a sovereign in this dispensation. Grace personifies the risen Christ, who has royal prerogatives now. "The gov-

ernment is upon his shoulder, and his name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Look into the sanctum sanctorum of the Jewish tabernacle. There is the ark of the testimony. The law is there, with its power unbroken, and its wrath threatening the sinner with instant death. But, let the priest of God approach. His ceremonial preparations complete, there is no danger. The covering to the ark of the testimony is the seat of mercy. Mercy is enthroned there directly above and upon the law. The wings of cherubim are spread over the mercy seat, and the Shechinah is there to symbolize the glory of him who reigns a prince upon the throne of mercy. And, mark the import of these expressive symbols. They directly proclaim to the approaching culprit, "Draw near without alarm. The law is here, it is true, I must preserve its integrity; but it shall not harm you. I hold its thunders in abeyance. I satisfy its claims, and dispense mercy to those who deserve its fiercest wrath." Here is your safety.

Since your Savior came in person, and has redeemed the pledges of prophecy, the throne of grace is no longer local. Everywhere he reigns, and invites the world to his feet; not for trial, not for punishment, but "that they may obtain mercy." You have tried it, you went where the wrath of the law should have flamed out and consumed you, and you found "mercy." Come again. Here is "grace to help in time of need." Just in this hour of extremity the grace of full salvation is here at your command. Come, and come "boldly." This, you will say, is a strange liberty for a worm of earth. How can a poor sinner be bold in the presence of his righteous Judge, the august Sovereign of the universe? Surely,

not on his own account—not in view of any thing he has ever been, or thought, or felt, or done. If to himself alone he must look, it is right that he should shrink with alarm at the idea of an approach to God. But see; it is because we have a sympathizing High Priest that we are to come "boldly." The degree of your confidence in this approach is to be the measure of the honor you will confer upon your sympathizing Savior. "Boldly," because he bleeds, and weeps, and prays for you; "boldly," for you come at his own command to ask the grace you need; "boldly," for he bends toward you and stretches out his wounded hands to receive you; "boldly," for he cannot deny himself, he will redeem his rich and gracious promise, and "save to the uttermost." O, trembling spirit, take courage; be not afraid of Jesus; come near to him; fall into his arms; press closely to his bosom, that you may feel the throbbings of his heart of love. Let him wrap you in his crimson vest, and you shall feel, and say, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us"—cleanseth me—"from all sin." Now let your fears depart;—no more shrinking or hesitating. With humble simplicity, with faith that receives Christ for every thing—your "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption"—claim the answer to prayer, and claim it now, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," "Create in me a clean heart, O, God." You are urging the prayer; hear what your Savior says; "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Here let your humbled spirit rest, and claim the full efficacy of the atonement, for yourself, without a doubt. Do you now really do this?

O, how sweet this divine influence running through the soul; how wonderful this amazing renovation,—this gracious baptism,—this sinking down into God! What richness of faith, what power of love, what rest of spirit! Cleansed by the Holy Ghost, what a sacred sense of inward purity, what visions of God, what deep and holy joy fill the soul,—love, "perfect love!" it "casteth out fear."

If you are right, you have believed implicitly in the promises of God, and what safer exercise of the immortal soul can ever, under any circumstances, be possible? The holy, immutable God, cannot be untrue, and we will trust that, at last, you have confided in him fully; without a doubt. You have believed the Savior, and cast your all upon him forever. Your consecrated soul has accepted him to the exclusion of every thing else, as your entire sanctification, as your all in this world, and in the world to come; and your calm, appropriating, commanding faith, has been answered in the descending baptism of the Holy Ghost. Until the reception of this inward witness, you have not believed the work accomplished. Your faith was a present, prevailing power, that brought the assurances of God's word into one decisive moment, and then you believed that you had the things for which you prayed; but you did not believe you had obtained the blessing of holiness that you might obtain it.

3. There is a necessary distinction between the fact and the condition of the fact. Faith in the blood that cleanses, is certainly antecedent to the fact of being cleansed, and a condition of it. Then the order of time must be, 1st, the faith in Christ and his promises, that

secures the application of his cleansing blood; 2d, the fact of the blood applied, which takes all sin away; 3d, the evidence of the fact—direct, the witness of the spirit—inferential, from the feeling of renovation and the promises; 4th, faith in the fact founded upon the evidence.

This succession is, generally, matter of consciousness; but it need not be, to be true, for, as we before had occasion to remark, succession is frequently so rapid as to be inappreciable. The yielding, the trust, the cleansing, the witness, may all be so closely successive as to seem simultaneous. But that the condition of a fact must precede the fact, is a universal truth; that the fact must precede the evidence of the fact, is another; that the evidence of the fact must precede belief in the fact, another; that no fact can be a condition of itself, another. Faith in the existence of a fact, the condition of its existence is an absurdity.

Faith in the possible, is one thing; faith in the probable, another thing; faith in the morally certain, another; and faith in the actual, another. Now to say that faith in the fact that we are cleansed from all sin, is a condition of being so, is to say that belief in the actual is a condition of the actual, which is either to speak unintelligibly, or to say what cannot possibly be true. The Scripture that has been supposed to teach this doctrine, only insists upon faith in the present answer to prayer, an important duty by far too much overlooked. The soul gasping for purity, cries out, "I believe he is able to cleanse me;" this is faith in the possible. "I believe he is willing;" faith in the possible strengthened. "I believe he is able and willing to cleanse me now, just as

I am;" faith in the probable. "I believe he will do it;" faith in the morally certain; the last earthly reliance is renounced. "I believe he does save me; I sink into his arms; the promise is sure; the renovating power runs through me; the spirit itself beareth witness; I believe that I receive the things I ask; I am saved, completely, perfectly saved;" this is faith in the actual. It is believed there are many witnesses to the truth of this description.

And is not this finally what we all mean? When brethren insist that we shall believe the work now accomplished, and it surely will be; it certainly is; do they mean to exclude the prerequisites of entire consecration, and faith in the power and willingness of Christ to save wholly? We do not understand them so. We think there is not one who would not insist upon these as indispensable to the application of the cleansing blood. Do they mean that the simple belief of any man, that he is wholly sanctified, is a condition and an evidence of his being so, without regard to his previous state, or present exercises? We are sure they do not. We presume all include the inseparable antecedent of a conscious perfect dedication of the soul and body to God, for time and eternity. Now mark, if we attack them upon the supposition that they mean real dedication, because conscious, we make a false issue, for they certainly mean conscious because real, not real because conscious. Again, to whom do they say, "Believe that the work is done, and it is done?" To those who are without a present, perfect, appropriating faith in the cleansing blood of Christ? We think not. The exhortation is usually, at least, based upon the supposition that the

faith in the blood of Jesus, is really that which cleanseth from all sin, and hence the soul is bound to believe the work accomplished according to the unchangeable faithfulness of God. Observe, it is so because he believes in Christ for it. He believes it is so because it is so, and it is not so because he believes it.

But when the consecration is perfect, and the faith really sanctifying, who does not know that Satan has many devices to prevent the enjoyment of the blessing? Preconceived opinions, almost certainly erroneous, are thrust in for comparison, and it is the fell design of the enemy that instead of making experience the test of these opinions, they shall be the test of experience. Hence the instant suggestion, this deep humility; this settling into God; this dissolving love; this amazing simplicity; this perfect repose; this seraphic sweetness, is not entire sanctification;—it is a deeper work of grace—a great blessing. You must look for something more wonderful than this. Alas! How many have been thus defrauded, when nothing was wanting but to believe the work complete. It really was so; and, by the blood and promise of Christ—by the power and testimony of the Holy Ghost, they were entitled to believe it; and they grieved the blessed Savior, and brought darkness upon their souls by refusing to believe it.

To remedy an evil so extensive and so fearful in its effects, many have called attention most earnestly and beseechingly to the idea of present faith; faith in the actual fulfilment of the Savior's promises, when their conditions occur. In some instances, it is true, there has seemed to be an overlooking of these conditions, and so far, of course, zeal has done injury; but in the general,

we are persuaded, this has been only in appearance. And just so far as present prevailing faith has become the ruling element of prayer, great good nas been accomplished.

4. How deeply have "the pure in heart" mourned as they have witnessed the general feeling of distance from the great event of entire salvation! It has exhibited itself in the utter omission of the subject from prayers, conversation and preaching; in the languor which has accompanied occasional allusions to it; in the manifest timidity of even good men when the subject was mentioned in company; in the dreadful silence that has frequently followed the humblest professions of those who have tremblingly claimed the precious blessing; in the cautions that have been occasionally dropped, to beware of enthusiasm; and most of all, in the conduct of the great mass of professed believers in the doctrine of holiness, who, it must be mournfully confessed, have not acted as though they were expecting the cleansing baptism of the Holy Ghost to follow their labors; as though they felt themselves to be upon the very point of realizing the efficacy of the Savior's blood to cleanse them from all sin; as though they really stood upon the very shore of the great ocean of holiness, and were just about to plunge in and be made every whit whole. After sermons and prayers, and exhortations, they have not been looking this way and that, to find the spirits who were "all on fire to be dissolved in love." Indeed, we cannot resist the conviction, that a struggle for full deliverance just now, and especially, the humble declaration of success in the struggle, followed by an earnest effort to bring others into the immediate triumphs of faith, would excite an evident concern for

the stability and unity of the church. Entire sanctification may be preached, may be prayed for, may be conversed about sparingly, so long as the time is in the distant future! It may even be urged as a present privilege; but who can deny the alarm and the caution and the standing-off which follow present action and profession according to the faith of our fathers?

It is under these circumstances that many have cried out with spirits almost bursting with grief, not hereafter, not next year, not to-morrow, but now, dear brethren, even this very moment, we are called to holiness. Distance! Alas! this fatal, fearful distance has well-nigh ruined us. Now is the time to seek for perfect love—now is the time to obtain it. Now is the time for the whole church to rouse herself and rush into the glorious strife. This is the very day to gird on our armor, to fight and to conquer.

And in the same spirit prayer has, at least in a few instances, put off its procrastinating forms, and assumed a confidence, a boldness, a power, which calls down the present baptism upon the panting spirit. And faith is talked of, and urged as a power that acts instantly in the struggle for purity—that grasps a perfect Savior and will not let him go; that believes at once every thing he has said; appropriates now the blood that cleanseth from all sin, and hence entitles the soul to the glorious faith that the work is done, that it has in very deed the thing for which it prays. A commanding, active, omnipotent style of faith, this, which annihilates time, and makes the order of events comparatively unimportant. Would to God there was more of it.

In this struggle, probably some have stated injudi-

ciously, and even erroneously, the conditions of entire sanctification. The faith that sanctifies may have been, in some instances, lost sight of, in the anxiety to secure faith in the fact that the work is already done. Too literal an adherence to the language of one text, may have diverted attention from the scope of the sacred writings upon the subject. Some may have believed, prematurely, that they were wholly sanctified. All this is probable. Admit that it is even certain, and that so far we have cause to regret, and be admonished of our danger.

5. We dare to believe no radical difference exists among us; indeed, we would almost venture to write the very words in which we all really harmonize. Are we correct that our brethren who have been deemed in error on this subject, do mean that those whom they exhort to believe they have received the blessing, are supposed to have made a perfect consecration of soul and body to God forever;—that by appropriating faith they have apprehended and received the cleansing power of a Savior's blood, and are hence entitled to "reckon themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord," but have been hindered by erroneous opinions, by constitutional timidity, by fears of self-deception, by the artificial terrors inspired by an unbelieving age, or by the direct influence of the devil, from claiming the blessing;—in fine, that they wish men to believe in a fact, not that it may be a fact, but because it is a fact; and that their great aim is to excite present inquiry, present effort, present faith, present answer to prayer; to secure present entire salvation, present evidence of it, and present belief in the fact?

Then, in principle, they are right. Let us commune with these spirits for a few moments.

6. We have no selfish ends to serve; a blind devotion to any particular phraseology is no part of our character; an attempt to get all men to adopt our peculiar "Shibboleth," no part of our mission. We will give up forms, words, illustrations, any thing, every thing, but the thing itself; holiness, a distinct blessing to be sought, obtained, professed, practised, and urged with all humility and love, but with might and main, upon the whole church,—entire sanctification through faith in Christ, the present privilege, and the present duty of all Christians. This we never will give up. In the name of Jesus, and with the eye of faith fixed upon his cleansing blood, we will contend for it till death shall sign our release.

But subordinate to this we will be any thing or nothing, for the sake of the cause. We will modify our forms of expression, so as to obviate, if possible, the objections of brethren. We will be even more particular to insist upon the prerequisites of entire consecration and perfect trust in the merits of the Savior, and upon the evidence, direct and indirect, that the work is wrought as the ground of believing that it is. We will try to speak of "believing that we have it," in such a way that all the world shall know, we mean it is because we have the evidence that it is ours. So long as we are without the evidence, we will admit that there is some defect in our faith; that, whatever it may be, it is something less than appropriating faith. And when we urge seekers of the blessing to believe that they have it, it shall always be, not that they may obtain it, but because, upon

close and careful examination, we believe they have already received it; because in their subdued spirits, in their melted hearts, in their dissolving love, in their quiet mighty faith and heavenly words, they exhibit the phenomena of the sanctified state, and are entitled to the faith of assurance.

So shall the advocates of holiness speak a common language, as well as believe a common faith, and aim at a common object. And we have all the solemn motives of eternity to seek union among ourselves. In numbers the church is comparatively a feeble band; but with united power, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, she will accomplish her mission. Infinite gratification no doubt it would be, to our common foe, to see us distracted by theological controversies; divided and scattered upon words, and illustrations, and means, when we are, in fact, all actuated by the same lofty and soul-stirring aims. No! It must not, cannot be. Jesus, our perfect Savior, will graciously prevent it; and with a heart of love, throwing its life-current to the extremities, at every pulsation, we shall move on simultaneously in our holy work.

7. We return to the earnest seeker after the blessing of perfect love. We trust it has done you no harm to think. Even a brief discussion upon a point of difficulty, and especially of difference among the friends of holiness, would, perhaps, confuse and discourage a mind merely under the influence of temporary excitement. The whole effort might be abandoned as the result of strong temptation. But we have assumed that your resolution is an intelligent and decisive one, the result of profound conviction followed by the dissolving of

heart, the sincerity of confession, and the completeness of consecration, which belong to this thorough and exalted work. Indeed, we have supposed you in the very act of casting yourself, by a faith that in no respect wavers or hesitates, upon the merits of the Savior's blood for entire sanctification; and you are not diverted. You have felt it a pleasure to pause in the calmness of sustained confidence, and examine the character of true sanctifying faith; and do you see it clearly? At least, you understand that it is not merely faith in Christ for the forgiveness of actual sin;—not the trust that removes a burden of guilt. This, you have long enjoyed, and quite well understood. But now you have been called upon for a higher and more commanding style of faith,—a faith that claims ample provision in the gospel for entire deliverance from sin—power in the blood of Christ to cleanse you from all sin, and to accomplish this work, not at some future indefinite time,—not to-morrow, but now,—just as you are. A faith has been demanded that would yield nothing to the suggestions of the enemy, or the timidity of shrinking self, but claim the immediate application of the cleansing blood, washing away every stain, and filling the soul with "all the fulness of God." Do you now exercise this faith? Do you this moment claim for yourself, the complete efficacy of the atonement, extending to every defect, and every want of the soul? Is your doubting at an end, and henceforth, are you to have just what there is in Christ, and only this, for your portion in this life, and in the life to come? Do you take him for your "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption?" And are you satisfied to be shut up to this result,—to have

no other resource,—no other dependence for happiness or security, now and forever? How delightful is the simplicity of appropriating faith. One object "the fairest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely," fills the whole field of vision. One exercise engages the soul; —trust—simple trust, for all you want,—confidence that claims the atoning blood as just sufficient to meet every demand, and extending to every part of indwelling sin, not to apologize for it, but to remove it totally and at once, so that henceforth you may "reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here then let your soul rest, calmly, sweetly rest. Already the saving blood may have been applied. Even now, you may feel the calm sinking into God,—the desending baptism of the Holy Ghost.—At this moment you may hear the quiet whispers of the witnessing Spirit, and experience the fulness, richness, and power of perfect love. God grant it may be so. But let not your faith, your reliance, your appropriating trust waver for a moment. This is to be steady and complete, not affected by any mutability of feeling or circumstances. Simply, because Christ is true, and God's word cannot fail you, are to believe every promise. Such confidence will not be in vain, for the promises of God are, "yea and amen to him that believeth."

SEC. VII. THE PRAYER OFFERED.

The spirit of prayer must pervade this whole effort. The conviction in which it has its origin, depends much upon this for its clearness, pungency and success. It is true, that much of the convincing work of the Holy

Spirit is without the consent of the soul enlightened; but nothing of actual salvation is accomplished without the free concurrence of the moral agent. The Holy Spirit is given in special power to them that ask him, and thus the mind inquiring after holiness receives the strongest conviction of its necessity and possibility, while humbly and ardently breathing out its desires for the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit. Those who are unfaithful in their devotions feel very little "hungering and thirsting after righteousness,"—very little conviction for indwelling sin. There is moreover no strength in resolution to seek for holiness which is not aided in answer to prayer. God gives power to form the purpose, inspires it with his own divine energy, and maintains it in increasing firmness, in answer to prayer. He sends the melting power that prepares the soul for the completion of this great work in answer to prayer. He gives strength and sincerity to make the required confession in answer to prayer. There is no real and full consecration but by the special aid received in answer to prayer, and the "faith that works by love and purifies the heart," the clear, comprehensive, commanding faith which realizes the promise "ye shall be clean," is stimulated and invested with its omnipotent power in answer to prayer. Prayer is therefore the grand means of success in this great undertaking. But some particulars deserve special consideration.

1. Prayer should be intelligent and discriminating, to secure its object with greatest ease and certainty. We grant that there are manifest provisions for much of human weakness and ignorance. We do not deny, but

are happy to allow, that many who from the negligent habits of early life, or the force of theological training, have failed to acquire just views of the special work of sanctification, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and in answer to prayer, that is quite general, and undefined in its objects, do actually receive the cleansing baptism, and become real examples of perfect love. But all this indefiniteness is evidently in the way of the most sincere exertion. There is confusion in the view, and dissipation of thought, giving great advantage to temptation, and preventing the grasp of faith, which is so important in such a crisis. Let the thing desired be matter of distinct and intense thought, and separated from every thing else, let it be asked for.

For this definiteness in prayer, you have ample authority in divine revelation. You are now in the condition of David, who longed for inward purity, and with him you can pray "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;"—"cleanse thou me from secret faults." This is exactly to the point. There is no confusion, no indefiniteness in this prayer. Urge it in the name of Christ until it is answered. You pray in harmony with apostolic pleadings in behalf of Christians. Read the following: "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Here is the Scripture warrant, and you take up the prayer of the apostle, and ask for yourself what he has

asked for you and others. You wish to be ready "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints," and you pray "that our God would count you worthy of this calling; and fulfil," in you "all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ." This is exactly what you are now asking,—"the work of faith with power;" and how strong is the consolation, in the fact that you pray in the use of inspired language, and ask nothing disallowed or questionable in character or extent. The Savior prayed "Sanctify them through thy truth," and you pray, "Sanctify" me "through thy truth." He teaches all his children to pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven;" and you say "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" in me, and by me, "as it is in heaven." The apostle prays "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly," and you say "the very God of peace sanctify" me "wholly." This is specific prayer for the blessing of entire sanctification, and, as you distinctly see, it is entirely in accordance with the revelation of God.

And why should you not ask for the very blessing you need and desire? When you want one thing of your fellow-man, you do not ask for another. The very thing asked for is what you may expect to obtain. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or, if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or, if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much

more shall your Heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." Here is revealed the infinite willingness of God the Father to answer our prayers, and the Scripture authority for asking, expecting, and receiving the specific blessing desired. What is thus so in harmony with reason, is exactly in accordance with the divine plan. No "scorpion"-gift shall be presented to the child who asks "an egg;"—no deceptive influence shall be given to the devout believing mind which pleads for "the Holy Spirit;"—he who seeks the purifying baptism from above, may recognize the voice of unchangeable veracity in the assurance, "Ask and ye shall receive." We mean not that the good are never to ask anything else but perfect love; but all things whatsoever they ask when they pray should be as distinctly defined as possible, and especially so of this great and full salvation. Let the mind be so centred and fixed upon it, that its pleading may be earnest and absorbing. In this way may the full power of prayer be realized.

2. Your own helplessness must be deeply felt. Prayer is the language of dependence, and to exert its utmost strength the sense of dependence must be complete. This has been shown to you in a remarkable degree at the time of your voluntary consecration, but it must not be forgotten in your prayers for a clean heart. Look again at this utter want of strength in yourself. See how you sink into nothing before the flaming law and the awful purity of God. Where are the powers within you by which you can hope to cleanse away the stains of sin, or raise yourself to the bliss of perfect love? What fact in your character or life, could you think of

pleading, as the ground or reason for your sanctification? You can think of none,—there is absolutely nothing of self which can deliver you, or upon which you can place any value. It is given up; it is all yielded a willing sacrifice, and Christ is all to you. In this utter self-abandonment, with what exclusive reliance do you turn to your bleeding Savior. This is the frame of mind for prayer. O, how strong is the merit of his blood! how perfect are all the provisions of infinite love in him! Nothing more is wanted, nothing asked, nothing thought of. "The blood of Jesus Christ—cleanseth from all sin."

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

Here is the place for the strength of prayer. There seems to be nothing now in its way. It rises in bold and humble confidence, and claims the realization of its largest requests.

3. Faith must triumph in the prayer for a clean heart. We have discussed faith in a separate section, but we must return to it here. It is mingled as we have assumed in all right mental exercises which relate to the work of God in the soul. It has not, we are sure, been absent in one of your investigations, or struggles to reach the grand result held out to you in the holy Scriptures. But it has special position and importance in the pleadings of prayer. All this you understand; but you may even now be asking what am I entitled to believe? We answer clearly and distinctly, that the provision for you in the blood of Christ is ample,—is exactly what you need,—is, at this moment, available to

save you to the uttermost. Moreover, your confidence in the revealed method of obtaining the avails of the Savior's death should be unwavering. You are to "ask and receive that your joy may be full." You are asking, and it would be a great error to assume that it avails nothing to ask,—that there is no blessing connected with right obedience to God in an effort of prayer. True, there is no merit in prayer,—no merit in any thing but in the blood of Jesus. It is not, however, a question of merit, but of the advantages of asking,—of the blessing guarantied to prayer. What are your rights on Christ's account alone as a praying man, and especially when you are pleading for entire sanctification? The Savior himself shall answer. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it." Look now at the strength of this position. "It is the will of God, even your sanctification"—that you should be sanctified wholly. He has said, "Ask and ye shall receive." You are asking with deep conviction of your necessity,—with firm purpose to persevere,—with all you have, and are, so far as you can now see or understand, consecrated to God forever,—with your resolution acknowledged in the sight of heaven and earth, and your heart all melted down before God under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Under these circumstances you are asking in the name of Jesus. Are you not then in duty bound to believe that he will do it? He surely will. Read his sacred promise again: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." What can command your faith if this declaration cannot? How

are you to excuse yourself for a moment's hesitancy? It is the unequivocal declaration of Christ—the veracity of the Savior, that you are called upon to believe. O, doubt it not. As certain as it must be the desire of the Father to be glorified in the Son, your simple, earnest, believing prayer shall be answered. This is your stronghold. In this divine condescension, in this gracious assurance, all things requisite for soul and body, for time or eternity which you shall ask, believing, are thus secured to you. You will guard against postponement. Again, we urge a faith that brings you at once, even this very instant, into the enjoyment of the fulness. Hear the Savior once more, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." How evidently he who knows all things would guard you against all idea of distance,—against deferring the time for the reception of the special blessing for which you pray. True, the reception must be after the prayer for the blessing desired, but it should be immediately after; the reception must be after the faith that brings the blessing, but it should be instantly after, so as indeed to make the asking, believing and receiving, virtually simultaneous. "Ye shall have them." They are purchased for you. They have been long proffered to you. They are ready at hand to be conferred upon you, and the very moment your faith in Jehovah's promise,—in the blood of Jesus, is such as to command them, "ye shall have them."

But do you say, I believe in the power and willingness of Christ to save me from all sin. I ask it, believing that he will just now answer the prayer, and yet I feel no change,—no inward witness,—no special

baptism. Am I notwithstanding entitled to believe that I do receive the blessing? Certainly not; your state of mind is not such as would inevitably follow if the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost had fallen upon you. Do you therefore ask, has not the promise of the Savior then failed? No verily. We beseech you indulge in no such unworthy idea of the infinite Jesus. Check at once this propensity to lay the blame or the responsibility of a failure on him. You will surely see the reason in yourself; and even now he who is infallible in knowledge and truth, is saying to you, as he did to others, "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss." It is not for the same reason, that you ask amiss; and yet so long as you fail, you are bound to believe that, in some particular, you "ask amiss." Forget not how frail you are,—how imperfect are all human knowledge and judgment, and you will in all humility allow, that your consecration is imperfect, or your appropriating faith too weak while the answer delays. But you will by no means hence be discouraged. Remember it forever, that you have given yourself to God in holy covenant; and though he tarry, he will surely come. Keep your position, humble and self-abased at your Savior's feet. Breathe in ceaseless urgency the prayer, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." He will "strengthen you" for the conflict. He will exhibit to you, with clearer and clearer evidence, the great and sufficient provision for all your wants; a provision present, and available for you now just as you are, and you will rise in the power of faith, and claim your purchased inheritance.

We have thus discussed separately, the important

steps, from profound conviction to triumphant faith in prayer, which we believe to be indispensable to a present realization of entire sanctification. We have seemed to detain the earnest seeker, when, at different points in this process, he has been quite ready to enter into the perfect rest of faith. But we trust this has been only in appearance. Nay, we would feign believe that many of our readers have anticipated us, and in the very act of consecration, have so prayed and believed as to receive the full assurance of entire salvation. Indeed, the points we have separately placed before our readers, are in immediate connection with each other; and, as we have before assumed, are sometimes so rapidly experimented as to annihilate all appreciable ideas of time. While we have occupied space with explanation and argumentative language, and the reader's time in passing from one section to another, he has seen how intimate are the relations of these several topics, and how unavoidably our discussions of them have run into, and implied each other. The combined harmonious effect is the only object we have in view. Happy for the reader, if at any point in this investigation, he has been able to realize the present power of the Holy Ghost to cleanse from all unrighteousness.

Aware, however, that some minds must move slower than others, we have hoped, by a more distinct presentation of the steps to be taken, to aid them in reaching the glorious result, they so earnestly seek. Happy shall we be, if even, one by one these steps have been taken, and thus deliberately, any have been brought into the clear enjoyment of perfect love. At least, allow us to believe that the one who now reads

is able, from a full heart, and upon the most reliable evidence, to say,

"'T is done, thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless,
Redemption in thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace."

SEC. VIII. THE EVIDENCE RECEIVED.

A question of the utmost importance now presses itself upon our attention. How can it be known whether the work of sanctification is complete? What is the evidence of the fact to the individual in whose soul it is wrought?

1. The witness of the Spirit. We lay it down as a general truth that all authoritative communications to the spirit of man come from God. Revelation is authoritative, because God is its author. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The great Source of all truth knew what the facts and principles were which were needed for a general and special revelation to the race; and he communicated them to holy men, to be written and disseminated. But revelation cannot settle a question of fact, in relation to the light in which God views us personally. He, alone, knows what is passing in his own infinite mind, and therefore, he alone can declare it. Hence, the position, that the Holy Ghost is the great truth-telling agent to the souls of men. Mark the promise of the Savior, "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the

spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." Again; "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." And again, "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine and show it unto you." Notice also the language of St. Paul; "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew; for, had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now, we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

We have brought these very important passages

together that the reader may see the great strength of our main position, which is, that all our knowledge of divine things comes from God. We ask attention to the following particulars:

(1.) We receive all our spiritual saving influences "from above, from the Father of lights." We can neither produce nor deserve one of them.

(2.) We cannot by our own natural intelligence know them as they exist in God, nor that they are for us, nor that we have met their conditions, nor what they are when we receive them. "The Spirit of truth the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom—which none of the princes of this world know." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" "for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" What one individual can tell what is passing in the mind of another individual? "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Thus it is seen that our ignorance of divine things is real and total, arising out of actual, natural incapacity for independent spiritual knowledge. The reasons are given. This knowledge must relate to "the things of God," which he alone can know, and "the natural man," in his fallen state, is morally disqualified for discovering these elements of divine intelligence. "They are foolishness unto him,

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Our ignorance relates to all that we have need to know or receive.

(3.) The Holy Spirit has all this divine intelligence, and all these gracious influences which we need, and cannot furnish to ourselves. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." "Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." Here is the requisite intelligence; the omniscience of God. Evidently, therefore, should it please the Almighty, he can communicate to us exactly what we require.

(4.) It is in the economy of grace that these necessary divine communications shall be actually made to us by the Holy Spirit. They are promised. "Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." "He shall testify of me." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." "He shall receive of mine and show it unto you." Thus much then is clearly revealed. Knowledge of the divine mind in relation to us,—of the divine Spirit himself,—of all truth belonging to our sphere and included in our salvation,—of the things of Christ reserved for us, is possible to us, is provided for us, is promised to us; and the unimpeachable veracity of the witness is solemnly guaranteed in the fact of his asserted divinity, and the distinct emphasis with which he is repeatedly styled "the Spirit of truth."

(5.) We find it established that these divine communications of grace and facts have been repeatedly made to men. The Holy Ghost has actually communicated personally to individual minds, all the stupendous truths

of divine revelation. To good men it has been said, and may now be said, "Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." It is true that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed them unto us." "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God," and when these things are thus divinely revealed to us we do not conceal them; "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth; but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." A divine testimony is borne to the soul, and thence to the church, of "the things that are freely given to us of God;" sometimes, as in the case of the apostles, including the higher revelations of authoritative teaching, to complete the sacred canon, and "things to come," for the miraculous ends of holy prophecy.

(6.) When it is seen what vast comprehension, and yet what minute detail are included in the exclusive sphere of divine teaching, who can doubt that the method of attesting all that we are in relation to God, and all we receive from him, is here given? Indeed, nothing can be clearer than that all our knowledge of divine things comes from God;—that not a single just conviction, or the least reliable direct instruction upon any of these great questions can come from any other source. The sinner, as we have seen, must have the witness of the Spirit—the direct announcement of his guilt, or he will never know it. The act of pardon is purely the act of

God, and he alone can in the first instance testify to it. He only can tell when the faith of the penitent is such as to render the pardon righteous and safe. When he sees that all the particulars required, combine in the one act of faith, which claims the blessing of pardon for Christ's sake alone, he, by his Holy Spirit, declares the fact, and the direct evidence of justification is very properly termed the witness of the Spirit. What, though no special scripture, in so many words, affirms this witness? Its necessity is in the nature of the case, and the teaching we have given above from the sacred records, is sufficiently explicit. The Savior's promise is redeemed to this penitent, believing soul; "He shall take of the things of mine and show them unto you." This pardon is one of "the things freely given to him of God," and he has received "the Spirit which is of God," that he might know it as he receives it. This is that spirit-voice, which first speaks to him, and says, it is done; your petition is granted; your sins are pardoned. It is a strange, sweet, inward persuasion that God for Christ's sake has forgiven him all that is past. It is the witness of the Spirit to the justification of the believer.

Inseparable from the act of pardon is the fact of adoption. This, too, is attested directly by the Holy Spirit. To genuine Christians at Rome, and in a manner that shows it applicable to all who are truly converted, St. Paul said, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." In the epistle to the Galatians this delightful

truth is reaffirmed. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." Now, let it be observed, this explicit statement is made in regard to adoption, not to take it out of the general law, but to show very expressly that it is included in that law;—not to exclude any or all other works of grace upon the soul, equally divine in origin and influence, but to aid gentile and other believers, in understanding the fact that their sonship was in no respect questionable. Aliens as they were from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, they were now brought nigh by the blood of Christ, and this glorious truth of sonship was not to be doubted, for it was officially attested by the Holy Spirit, as one important instance of the fulfilment of the wonderful promise, "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." It is the witness of the Spirit to adoption to the sonship of the believer.

Just as explicitly does the Spirit of truth bear witness to the fact that "the blood of Jesus Christ," as the meritorious influence, "cleanseth from all sin." But the importance of this position, and the fact that it has been questioned, will render it proper to pause for a while, and consider it. The reader will now see how clearly this truth is included in the facts incontestably settled in the above discussion.

(1.) We receive all our spiritual saving influences from God; and, surely, this is a spiritual saving influence. None but divine power could cleanse the soul from all indwelling sin, and fill it with perfect love. The Holy Spirit is the efficient agent in the work of sanctification;

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." "God hath, from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, [not unconditionally, but] through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Let, then, this fundamental truth, that the Holy Ghost alone sanctifieth the soul through the blood of Christ, be deeply impressed upon the mind of the reader.

(2.) We cannot, of ourselves, know what this work is as God understands it. It is too high for our finite powers, and of course we cannot know that it is for us, only as he reveals it to us generally in his word, and personally by "the Spirit he hath given us." We cannot, from any human intelligence, know when we have met the conditions of this grace. We wish to emphasize this remark. The greatest danger of delusion lies in the opposite position. Assuming that we are competent judges of our own mental states, in their relation to the claims of God, some have marvelled why the answer did not come at the moment expected, and perhaps, have yielded to the temptation to lay blame upon God, for the delay of the baptism of fire; or, perhaps assuming that the conditions were met, have claimed the accomplishment of the work, without further evidence than reliance upon their own assumed knowledge of the completeness of their consecration, and the perfection of their faith. This is fearful presumption. We may be accurate in our consciousness of any

given mental state, but whether or not, as a religious condition, it is complete in character, or adapted to its object, or, satisfactory to the omniscient God, no human mind is competent to judge. Nor should we without divine teaching know the work when wrought, so as to be at all safe in determining what it is, when really given us, or that the blessing we have received is entire sanctification. It is said the effects upon our own souls will reveal it, and render the direct testimony of the Spirit unnecessary. We answer the inward effects of pardon and adoption are decisive, but, they by no means supersede the witness of the Spirit, which must precede and produce them. But it is claimed that the results in the life must show the work of sanctification complete. Certainly; but this is so of adoption. But here, in both cases, we anticipate the inferential proof; a matter that is not now under consideration. We are sure that no living man can assign a reason why that first inward persuasion that we are children of God, does not come from ourselves, which would not be exactly and equally applicable to the first powerful conviction that we are cleansed from all sin.

(3.) But the Holy Ghost has all this infinite knowledge, which, from the nature of the case, we cannot have. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." He knoweth the things of God, for he is God. What is the exact character of that gracious work which he proposes to accomplish for us, what are the precise conditions of that work, when they are exactly met, and when the work is accomplished, he knows and can declare it to us so that we can distinctly understand it. Let us forever, hereafter, accord this high prerogative to

him and to him alone. Nothing is safer, nothing more certain; while we must feel that nothing is more perilous than to assume it for ourselves.

(4.) The actual communication of the fact in this case, as well as others, is the order of God,—the method of his spiritual kingdom. Consider that the work is wrought by the Holy Spirit,—that he, in his divine intelligence, is present in the soul itself. "Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you;" and this is the reason why you shall know him in his true character and work. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Now mark; the fact of his being present—of his working in us, is a revealed explanation of the knowledge we have of our gracious privileges. It is thus that the evidence of adoption is explained, or, in other words, we have the witness of the Spirit to the fact because his influence and guidance have been received and acknowledged. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, for ye have received the Spirit of adoption." Here then is the law of this testimony. It must be borne by the author of the work. The Holy Ghost sanctifies the soul, therefore the Holy Ghost is the witness to the fact. Read the confirmation in the words of St. John. "But ye have an unction from the Holy one, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." Should any devout ones ask how it is that they are thus largely endowed with sacred knowledge, so that they are not to be misled with regard to the true character of Christ, how they have this clear, distinct witness of the work of

God in the soul, just as it is in all its degrees, inspiration answers; "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Who now can doubt that the sanctifying Spirit dwelling within the believer has this sacred knowledge for him, and that to communicate it is in accordance with the divine plan;—that it is promised to all, and actually affirmed of those who have received the special baptism of the Holy Ghost;—that it is not to one work of grace alone that the Spirit testifies, but to all which are ever wrought upon the soul.

As surely as the Holy Ghost is our sanctifier,—as he and he alone knows the nature, conditions fulfilled, and the time of entire sanctification,—as the blessing of holiness is one of "the things of Christ," which "he shall show unto us,"—as it is one of "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,"—as it is one of "the things that are freely given to us of God,"—as the Holy Ghost is "the Spirit of truth," and as surely as all things which we know directly, officially, authoritatively, are from him, we may have satisfactory and reliable evidence that we are sanctified wholly, and that evidence must be the witness of the Spirit.

2. The soul in which the work is wrought, recognizes and understands the divine testimony. It has been aware of a supernatural agency, operating, with silent power, to produce a state of perfect purity, and giving distinct assurance that the work is accomplished.

There is no voice audible through the outward ear.

It is not the divine method, to teach us by saying, as one man would say to another, your request is granted; the Holy Spirit now cleanses you from all inward depravity, and fills you with perfect love. We do not, it is true, deem this impossible; certainly, it would not be, if this were God's preference. But as other methods of divine communication are his choice, it is doubtless presumption to expect this, and delusion to claim it.

Nor, would we call the state of mind produced by the witness of the Spirit, an impression; for there is much which is misleading in the doctrine of impressions. It is doubtless easy, and we think quite common, for minds of ardent temperament, to mistake their own impulses, or preferences, or even satanic influence, for the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Amid the tumult of passion, or the contentions of rival powers, there is great need of discriminating care, in judging of impressions. Both the caution and the test are given in divine revelation. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." In other words false teachers, in the very power of antichrist, will appear, professing to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit; but they will be practical rejecters of Christ; either denying him altogether, or denying his proper humanity, or true divinity. Reject such "false prophets." They are not of God; and in the same way there will be impressions made upon your minds, which are not in accordance

with the character, and teachings, and spirit of Christ. They will fill you with self-confidence, and so reject the merits of Christ;—with self-will, against the meekness, tenderness, and submissiveness of Christ;—with unholy self-love, against the melting love of Christ. Reject these spirits. They are not of God. They deny the incarnate Son. We know the Spirit of God by the direct opposite of all this. Its teachings are all abasing to man, but honoring to Christ. Against all visionary schemes of salvation, against all delusive impressions from adverse spirits, divine revelation is the only sure protection. To this the soul asking the right, must appeal and defer, and in its explicit directions there is perfect safety.

We prefer, however, to speak of the mental state produced by the witness of the Spirit, as a divine persuasion or conviction of the truth communicated. And under the authority of revelation, to a mind suitably prepared, there is no necessity for mistake. When the conviction is thorough; when the soul is humbled in the dust; when it is entirely consecrated, and breathes out its prayers for full salvation, in such faith as to secure the answer, divine teachings will surely be understood. With the witness that the work is accomplished will come the conviction that it is from God. The mind may be unaccustomed to nice distinctions; the individual may be utterly unable to tell you why he regards the state of his mind as a divine conviction, and yet he is so persuaded. God undertakes to make himself understood, and succeeds. There is a spirit-voice to a spirit-ear, and the communication is intelligible. In how many instances, have the uneducated received this

evidence from God, and been perfectly satisfied! The deaf and dumb have been taught of God with regard to their own spiritual state, and given every evidence of the correctness of their spiritual apprehensions. Savages but partially instructed, have been inwardly and powerfully persuaded that God has accepted them. Indeed, all true Christians are instances of the same supernatural conviction. When it had been out of the question for any of our friends to persuade us that we were pardoned or purified, though it was our most anxious desire to believe it, and theirs to have it so; just when no human power could produce the conviction, it was produced. When no argument could induce us to believe it, we did believe it. Thus, does the state of our own minds, in the recognition of the information communicated, attest the genuineness of the work. It is a delightful and decisive persuasion that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

3. The experimental results harmonize with the divine testimony. A peculiar simplicity and tenderness of spirit follow the accomplishment of this work. The complications of thought, and antagonisms of feeling, have not merely subsided, but been exchanged for a sweet and delightful harmony. All the powers of mind and heart have found unity in God, according precisely with the fact assumed, that they are voluntarily and wholly his. A conscious sinking into God, has saved the soul from those annoying cares for self, and perplexing doubts of the future, which belong to a state of imperfect sanctification. So it ought to be, and so it is. It is seen and felt that God reigns, and there is no concern for the stability of his government, or the security of

that which is committed to his care. The spirit which has long been agitated by rival forces, at last reposes entirely in the Redeemer, and finds perfect rest.

The consecration which has been chiefly an act, is now in an important sense a state,—a condition of the soul to be permanent. Not that it can never be lost; for doubtless moral freedom is still an essential element of human character, and the frailty of the moral constitution as the results of sin, suggests both the danger of conquest from without, and the need of perpetual consecration to the Redeemer; but it is still to be regarded as a determined and continuous fact; the soul sanctified wholly is a consecrated soul. This is conscious experience. A few moments after the work is completed, a few months, or many years after, this devoted spirit understands that it is not its own—that it must think, and feel, and act for God. Should the tempter gain the mastery, and self rise up and again, by the consent or negligence of the soul, assert its sway, then this state of entire consecration would be lost, and with it the evidence of perfect love.

In this sacred state there is no longer a feeling of distance from the blood of atonement. It is present and availing; and, at every moment, it saves to the uttermost. It does this because the faith that reposes upon it, is living and implicit. It is an act, an exercise to be sure, but it is a state,—a condition of the living spirit, which keeps it in holy union with the living Christ. Hence there is faith,—a felt, triumphant, holy power of faith, in darkness and light, in prosperity and adversity, amid friends and foes, in life or death, which explains the conscious triumphs of the soul in prayer,

the amazing energy of Christian effort, the humble heroism with which perils are braved, and the unnatural fortitude with which sufferings are endured.

A consciousness of purity is one of the desirable, experimental results of a completion of this work. We mean not the mere negative fact that no corrupt desires, no unholy motives are felt within at a particular time; but the feeling of purity itself; deeper, richer, fuller, than before. As the soul bathes in the ocean of redemption, as it lies humbled at the foot of the cross, as it meekly kisses the rod with which it is afflicted, as it stands firm against the shock of temptation, as it recognizes the presence and indwelling power of the Holy Ghost, it feels that it lives in purity.

And there is a fulness of love—a perfectness of delight in God, and his holy ways, which no language can describe. Love is steadier, stronger, and more pervading than formerly. Such is the depth of holy devotion to God and his cause, and such is the sense of security in Christ which it gives, that it may well be styled perfect love, which casteth out fear; and its increase is to mark the genuineness of its character. The soul which now loves with all its power, will be stronger and larger to-morrow, and will hence love more. It will, if faithful, increase perpetually in its power to love, and in the holy exercise of its devoted affections, pervading the intellect and controlling the whole man, and thus realizing the prayer of the great apostle; "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being

filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." This is the experience which the soul realizes in entire sanctification; feeling it, and giving it humble expression in the life, "to the glory and praise of God;" by no means to his own glory, for he is filled with a humility that sets up no claims for self, but all for his Master,—a humility that you can mark in the cast of his countenance, in the propriety of his words, in the tone of his voice, and in all his bearing toward his fellow men.

Finally, there is pure, rich and exalted happiness, in this state. It is not generally tumultuous. It is not likely to be overwhelming, but sure to be deep and comparatively steady. It is the calm repose of unwavering faith—of perfect love, and of "hope that is an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast." It will not be always the same in degree. It is liable to abatement in time of severe trials. It may be interrupted by "heaviness through manifold temptations." It may be varied by the state of the body, especially of the nervous system, and by the sufferings and death of friends. It may be increased under the action of special means of grace, and by special baptisms of the Holy Ghost, so that with the psalmist the completely saved will exclaim "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

But, independent of all these variations, it is a state of happiness which arises from constant union with God;

which is too deep to be permanently or seriously affected by any contingencies, apart from unbelief; and which increases with the enlargement of the soul, and with every trial it endures. Inspired words shall again express this delightful experience. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

4. Reason will sustain the divine testimony. To reason ourselves into the belief that we are wholly sanctified, in the absence of this witness, would be perilous. We should surely be misled. It must moreover be expressly stated, that all reasoning is to be held subordinate to the authority of revelation. But there is much inferential proof, which ought to be carefully noted in this stage of religious experience.

You may argue, from the absence of sinful passions and propensities, with which you have had to contend in your previous state. You know these passions and propensities well. You have felt the risings of anger, of pride, of ambition, of lust; are they gone now? Have you noticed that the same temptations to these rising desires which formerly brought them into action, fail to do it now? In their place do you feel only love,

humility, purity? This, then, is as it ought to be; as it surely would be, if the work of sanctification were completed.

You may argue from a comparison of your feelings with the word of God. You notice the commandment, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world." Do you find no love of the world, nor of the things that are in the world, in your heart? It is well. So it ought to be if you are sanctified wholly. "Set your affection on things above;" are your affections placed on things above? "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks." Do you do this? This is one of the inspired tests. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Are you dead to sin, not legally, but really, in your moral being, in your feelings, in your affections, in you life? Is your "life hid with Christ in God?" But, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Have you the inward evidence of this growth? Can you see, from day to day, since you felt the evidence of being cleansed from all sin, that you are advancing,—that you are rising higher in the divine life? So it ought to be, if you are living in a state of entire sanctification.

Finally, you may argue, from the moral power of the Christian life within you. Do you find that it is evident, that it is steady, vigorous, and controlling? That it has utterly subordinated the natural life, and that you can say in candor, from the very centre of your being, "I live, nevertheless not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live is by the faith of the Son of God?" Do you perceive that you are, in your intercourse with

men, meekly and unobtrusively, but firmly and successfully, in an humble degree, representing Christ in the power of his love, so that your prayers, your pious conversation, and personal influence, are strongly felt against sin, and in favor of holiness? Are you really, from the known preference of your soul, and out of pure love to God, "ready to every good word and work?" So it ought to be in this holy state.

Let us then say, if you have the true witness of the Spirit that you are cleansed from all sin, it is so; for he can only guide you into truth. If your own spirit, acting and feeling, and judging, in accordance with the word of God, detects this divine testimony, you are surely right in claiming the blessing; and if you have judged correctly that this inward conviction of the work wrought, is from the Holy Spirit, then, as we humbly believe, you have felt this peculiar simplicity and harmony within; this oneness with Christ, this sinking down into God, and this perfect rest which we have attempted to describe. You now find yourself a consecrated man, not merely as you remember it, and by a special volition, make the offering anew, though this you will do, in all your humble, fervent breathings of prayer to God; but as a settled, felt, recognized, perpetual reality, you feel yourself to be wholly the Lord's, and the very thought of living to self gives you pain, and is banished at once as an obtrusive temptation. You feel the power of the cleansing blood, and fully believe that the Savior's infinite merits are yours. Your faith commands the realization of the divine promises, so intimately near, and unchangeably true is he of whom you ask and receive. You are conscious of a feeling of

purity pervading the whole soul. You love the Lord your God with all your heart, and do not feel the risings of affection for rival objects, which seek to charm you away from him. The love you bear to your families and friends, to the church of God, and to guilty sinners is purer, stronger than before, because it is in harmony with the will of God, and all for Christ's sake. Your humility, meekness, and gentleness of spirit, are the result of no effort, but they are your actual condition, and send out their streams from a purified fountain. Your sweet and sacred happiness, includes your whole being. You rejoice with unspeakable comfort, to find that the unholy passions which have formerly troubled and grieved you are gone. You find, upon comparison with the word of God, that in Christ, and through his merits alone, your state of mind and heart corresponds with the divine delineations of the image of God upon the soul. You feel the power of an inner life, that is pure and healthy, and growing in its own vital elements, and comes directly from God. Is all this true? Did you really feel it to be so when the answer came to your beseeching prevailing prayer? Do you find it to be so, now that time has elapsed since this holy triumph, sufficient for thorough self-examination, and careful searching of the word of God? Then "Cast not away your confidence which hath great recompense of reward." "Let no man take your crown." With these evidences, to doubt for a moment, would be surely wrong,—would be ingratitude, and if not corrected, would lead to the hidings of the divine countenance. Most solemnly would we charge you, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

SEC. IX. THE RESPONSIBILITY TAKEN

Have you now the evidence of your entire sanctification? Shrink not from the responsibility which this excellent grace implies. There is soundness in the position, that responsibility is always equal to privilege, and your privileges are great. You have received the special tokens of the Savior's love, and you are now required to return gratitude to the extent of your ability. Doubtless the most appropriate expression of gratitude which you can make, will be the faithful preservation of the grace you have received. This can only be done by a living faith in Christ, keeping you in perpetual union with the source of your purity and love.

But faith is an energetic, working power, and it is assumed that you are willing to do your duty. Whatever is the pleasure of your Lord is most delightful to you, and your "works" of holy devotion to God, of Christian benevolence, will correspond with the solemn acts of consecration, and trust in "the blood of Jesus," which have given you this valuable experience.

You would, however, greatly err were you to suppose that this responsibility is to be unpleasant to you,—that you have entered upon a life of unnatural restraint,—shut up to uncomfortable exactness, and forced sanctity. It would be difficult, more directly to misrepresent this high state of grace than by such an assumption. It is, on the contrary, the very home of the soul, the rest of perfect satisfaction with all that is truly right. It is true there will be a lively sense of the divine presence,

a quick apprehension of duty, a godly jealousy for the honor of Christ, and an earnest longing for greater heights of love, and deeper baptisms of the Holy Ghost. The burden of souls may be greater than before, and you will feel that you cannot be satisfied without witnessing the cleansing of the church, and the onward victorious march of Zion. But all this will be in your chosen way of duty. Your soul is adjusted to it, and you will find it your holiest delight to suffer and to do the will of God. "The just shall live by faith." You will be shut up to the present. The past will have no power to annoy you, for it is all atoned in the blood of Christ, which is your salvation. The future is to give you no concern, for it is not yours. You may never meet the cares and trials which your mind would naturally suggest. You may be in heaven before the day of tribulation comes; and, if not, your safety is with him to whom you have committed your all. He will cover you with his hand "until the indignation be overpast." For all the future, you are to trust in God without wavering. And how is life thus simplified? Am I now wholly the Lord's? Not, was I at some former time? Not, shall I be next year, next week, next moment, but now is it all right? Would that all Christians could obtain the power to live by the moment. It reduces indefinietly the concern of the soul, makes every thing a present passing reality, and secures the practicability of perfect contentment. It is easy to examine the present,—to settle the question of gracious acceptance now; but impossible to decide the future, only by the faith that determines the present. Am I now glorifying God in my body and spirit which are his? Am I now doing

his will? Does the blood of Jesus now cleanse me from all sin? Then it is all well. I have no other concern. As each succeeding moment of the future comes, it will be a present moment, and disposable in the same way. Here at least the wholly sanctified must rest; and this is the method of adjusting the question of responsibility. To ask what it will be, and shrink from its future demands, will be to involve the soul in doubt, and it may be inextricable difficulty. It is true the purest Christian has a future; but it is the future of faith, of hope, of divine revelation, and not of anxiety. The plans of a sound discretion in the light of the present and the past must extend into the future. A prudent foresight belongs eminently to faith, but it is the exercise of confidence and submission. "Thy will be done," is the clearest expression of choice and purpose. Surely this is not a responsibility to be dreaded. There is much more that is fearful and perilous in the responsibility of living without holiness.

It is time, however, to remark that you cannot appear before the church and the world in precisely the same character as before this work was accomplished. To know that a great and glorious change has taken place, and yet, willingly to make the impression that there is no change;—to know by the tests which revelation furnishes, that you are sanctified wholly, and yet desire others to think you are sanctified but in part, would be an inconsistency, not to say a guilty duplicity, which must destroy your confidence and sacrifice your position. We have thus reached the question of profession, which we propose to discuss in the plainest and most practical way.

1. Is it the duty of the wholly sanctified to acknowledge it? We answer affirmatively; and we place it upon the broad ground of truth. If any man "speaketh the truth in his heart," it is surely the man who is "cleansed from all unrighteousness." He is the very soul of truth. There is nothing in him that he has reason to conceal. He is all "light in the Lord;" and the sincerity of his consecrated spirit is like the bright shining of the sun. Perfect transparency of character has been reached, and must be maintained by the full application of the blood of Christ; but it would surely be sacrificed by a misrepresentation of the facts, or by entertaining a desire to conceal them. A profession of religion is the acknowledged duty of all true Christians; but what is to be the profession made? We answer, the truth, just as we understand it to be. He who undertakes to narrate experience must tell what he has experienced. He who mentions the work of Christ must tell what he has done. If the declarative glory of Christ depends upon what he has done, the more he has accomplished the more we have to tell, and the more he is glorified. If he has pardoned our sins, regenerated our natures, and adopted us as his children, we have so much to tell. With the psalmist we may say, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit; out of the miry clay, and set my feet

upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God, many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." And if the blessing should be greater, should we on that account shut it up in our own hearts, and allow no man to know it? or is there, anywhere in the Bible, an intimation that the work of God in the soul may be confessed up to a particular point, say of justification, and sanctification commenced, and that all beyond that is to be unacknowledged? We are sure not; for the more accomplished by rich and abounding grace, the more there is to be acknowledged, and, if possible, the greater the obligation to acknowledge it.

The psalmist, in his triumphant joy, said, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. But verily, God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me." Here is exactly our position. "I will declare what he hath done for my soul;" whatever it is, just as I have received it. I want you to know it, the whole of it. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." He had been "in trouble," and had made solemn vows. He engaged in a struggle of prayer, and obtained the victory. Had he "regarded [seen or approved] iniquity in his heart, the Lord would not have heard him," but the unmistakable answer, and the glorious deliverance, proved his sincerity in the utter renunciation and abandonment of all

inward sin. He would now keep nothing to himself in the matter. The grace he had received was too rich, too full, to be shut up in his own heart. Indeed, he would not even make a selection of witnesses from the church to hear his testimony; "Come and hear, all ye that fear God." To us it would seem that this was no ordinary state of grace, not the first initiatory experience of his renewed nature. There is too distinct a renunciation of heart-iniquity,—too intelligent and discriminating a struggle for deliverance, and too obvious a fulfilment of former pious vows, for such a construction. But whatever the Lord had done for his soul he proposed to declare. Who could doubt that, had it been more, his struggling gratitude would have sought to tell it, to all them that "fear God?"

Our Savior has endorsed the principle very distinctly. To one who had been saved from the power of an evil spirit, he said "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and had compassion on thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him. And all men did marvel." Great things indeed, the Lord had done for him, but had they been greater, must they therefore have been withheld? It is unreasonable. So much the more would the humble and hearty profession have been required.

As a part of an inspired argument, it is said, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For, with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

And what is that confession of Christ? Evidently acknowledging him in his true character and work. If the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin, can we truly and properly confess him, without acknowledging the whole truth? It would be to confess him in part,—to own a part of what he had done, but practically to deny the rest, and so far to deny Christ,—to deny the richest manifestation of his power and grace,—to accord to him a part of what is due, and withhold from him the rest. Is this the method of a true and faithful witness? It is perilous to withhold a just, an humble, and candid acknowledgment of Christ. He does nothing of which he is ashamed, which he would wish to have concealed, which he has authorized us to conceal. In the truest, fullest sense, as the most correct acknowledgment of his power to save, and his gracious act in saving, we must confess him. "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." We cannot be mistaken in asserting the danger at this point. It is true that we can conceive of states of mind, arising from erroneous or defective Christian education, and perhaps, from constitutional timidity, in which an honest fear of the responsibility of profession, might lead to delay, to the invention of excuses for delay, to the expression of less than the truth, or of the truth in such methods as to reveal the trembling and shrinking of spirit, which Jesus seeks to remedy, without such guilty denial of Christ as will lead him to deny us. But it would seem to be inevitable, that the experience must soon be

reduced to the measure of confession; and the tendency to go beyond the line of excusable diffidence, and true distrust of ourselves, into the sphere of shame, and distrust of Christ, is so strong, as to require the most affectionate and thorough admonition.

The reasons for insisting upon a candid and thankful expression of what the Lord has done for us are very evident. "Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." How important the effect to be produced; how salutary the lessons of instruction which are to be learned, from the faithful exhibition of the work of God upon the soul! The awakening of sinners, the sanctification of believers are before us, to induce us to reveal the truth. "Many shall see it, and shall trust in the Lord." The humble will rejoice in the faithful testimony of the triumphant believer. "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." How refreshing and instructive this holy triumph of a man of God. How well calculated to rouse the souls of the church, and inspire the desponding with the hope of victory. Had this noble testimony been suppressed, how much would have been lost to the devout and inquiring, for the lapse of advancing centuries, to the end of time. And who would now consent to exchange it for the timid, doubting, conjectural professions so frequent in modern times? Let us also read again with profound reflection, the triumphant testimony of St. Paul. "I am now ready

to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Who of us would have this testimony erased from the sacred record, and anything else inserted in its place?

But why should the argument be further extended? The whole system of Christianity is a system of transparent honesty,—of charming candor and simplicity; giving the clearest possible exhibitions of truth in the abstract and in the concrete, truth in principle, and in fact, and giving special prominence to experience, which becomes not objectionable and dangerous, requiring concealment, in proportion to its depth and purity; but increases in its subduing, saving power, as it approaches the elevated standard of the gospel. The whole genius of the Christian system, in the aspects now under consideration, is beautifully and powerfully expressed by the Savior. He addressed his own disciples in a way to guard them forever against the delusions of monasticism, the follies of the Essenes among the Jews, and the Gnostics among pagan philosophers. They dreamed of superior sanctity in retirement. They taught the greatest possible seclusion from men, and the silence of practical Quietism, as known in after times. But he said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: and it giveth light unto all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father

which is in heaven." No concealment here. The clearest, possible exhibition of the light of God in the soul, is due from us, as an expression of gratitude,—is required for the salvation of men, and the glory of God; and just in proportion as our light is less than it ought to be, or by any means obscured, or shut in from the view of men, we fail to promote these exalted purposes.

And let it not be insisted that the words of our lips have no part in this grand exhibition of God, for the illumination of the world. The royal psalmist shall again instruct us. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger; and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom; and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of thy kingdom." Here is the reign of God, the theme of triumph and praise, upon the part of the author of this incomparable hymn, to be taken up by other men, and uttered for the instruction of the age, and of generations to come. The works of God are called in to join the glad acclaim, and finally all the saints shall praise and bless him, shall speak of the

glory of his kingdom, and talk of his power. Splendid manifestations of God in the natural world are here the themes of devout recognition, the wonders of his Providence in behalf of his people are remembered, and the reign of mercy in the salvation of men in all coming time, becomes the theme of pious exultation. But notice especially, these things are to be devoutly spoken by all the saints; and let it not be said that this is merely the eulogium of contemplative minds, in view of the outward splendors of Jehovah's kingdom. These are heart-utterances from the highest spiritual apprehensions of God. So profoundly penetrated, it is assumed, the saints will be, with divine and saving influences, as that they shall recognize God in every thing. And then so holy and thrilling are the joys within, that they are to be expressed heartily by the lips. Who could wish to suppress the exultations of the psalmist, when he felt the power of God's kingdom within, and, looking out, saw its glory in the universe? It is useless to attempt it. He asks no man's permission; he makes no attempt at apology. "I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty and of thy wondrous works." Nor he alone. Other "men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts;" and, after recognizing the terrible majesty and greatness of God, "they shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness." What, but this, do we claim as the duty, and the privilege of Christians? Let the purest and the best say, I will "speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of thy kingdom."

It may be said there is no evidence that either of the inspired authors quoted, professed or intended to profess, the blessing of holiness. We think differently; but this question we have not attempted to settle. The language used is rich, and full, and triumphant, just as it ought to be, in a state of complete salvation, and in the highest spiritual exercises. The strong assurance of the dying Paul is the assurance we mean in a full preparation for heaven. But the argument is this. The experimental power of divine grace, in all its processes and degrees, should be clearly manifested, for the glory of God, and the good of others. It is to be uttered freely, humbly, and fully, in words. The extent and power of the experience are to be the measure of its expression, so far as words can represent the glory of the divine kingdom within. Simple truth is the basis of the whole, and the greater the truth the more delightful and influential its utterance. This cannot be questioned, and it sustains our position with the force of positive demonstration.

But it will be said, many who make profession of entire sanctification, show by their lives that they do not possess it. Let it, therefore, be observed that we are advocating the utterance of truth, not of falsehood. We refer to the test we have given in the preceding section. Those who have these evidences of the blessing, are the ones who have testimony to give, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. With the objector, we would say, let no man speak confidently, only so far as his confidence is sustained by the Bible; and we trust he will join with us to say, if the Christian is truly, and entirely consecrated, if he has received the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost, and has verily the testi-

mony of the Spirit to the fact that he is wholly the Lord's; if his soul is subdued, and sweetly saved from inward depravity, and powerfully filled with complete humility and perfect love, let him speak of it, to the glory of God and for the benefit of the church; for the richness and greatness of the blessing, does not constitute a reason for concealing it, but urges with overwhelming force its candid full confession. Does my reader say this? thus we are happily agreed, and will henceforth speak a common language.

We have not introduced the usual argument from the experience and counsel of holy men and women, who, from the humblest to the loftiest ranks of society, have been found with melted hearts, and in strongest confidence proclaiming the fact that they were indeed sanctified wholly; who have with the utmost tenderness and fidelity admonished us that we shall grieve the Holy Spirit if we refuse to acknowledge his work,—that many have lost the witness of perfect love, by failing to confess it. There is logical force in this testimony, and though we have given prominence to the argument from Scripture, we ought to entreat our readers to accept, in true humility, of the warnings and advice of those who have been honored of God and man, for the depth of their experience, and the wisdom of their teachings.

2. Under what circumstances should holiness be professed? No state of religion sets aside a sound discretion. When the nature of the case required it, Jesus said to the objects of his miracles, "See thou tell no man." He bade his own disciples "Cast not your pearls before swine," intimating a wise discrimination with respect to circumstances and hearers. Paul did

not say, on all occasions, "I am ready to be offered." David said, "I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me." Not that he would be careful to speak only the truth in the presence of wicked men; for this he would do before the righteous. But he would speak prudently,—he would utter nothing when the wicked were before him, that they would be likely to misunderstand or misrepresent to others. It may be said that, in their ordinary state, wicked men and even Christians, are unprepared to receive the full testimony of the wholly sanctified. It would not unlikely repel rather than subdue, or encourage them in goodness. Under such circumstances it would appear to us to be indiscreet to bring forward this testimony. It may seem to be mentioned gratuitously, as if to tax or challenge the faith which can hardly be assumed to exist. But under the manifest influence of the Holy Spirit when all present, whether saint or sinner, are fixed in attention, melted in tenderness, and are listening confidingly to what the good man will say as to the power of grace, this testimony humbly and truthfully given, will move the hearts of others as nothing else can. We have seen even multitudes swayed and dissolved, and sinners awakened under its influence, as if the breath of God were in it. The state as well as the character of an audience may be regarded as an important question, when we would decide whether this evidence is demanded or not; and it is obvious that the character, position, and spiritual condition, of the witness, is fundamental to the question. Much more may be safely said by one of tried and undoubted integrity, of marked humility, of known transparent candor, of sound discretion, and

whose perfect love is glowing under the divine influence, than by those who are without these peculiar advantages, though really saved from all sin. It will hence appear that sound counsel is against the indiscriminate announcement of this experience, in mixed assemblies, and under ordinary circumstances.

In proportion, however, as the audience is select, and imbued with the spirit of Christ, will be the probability of being understood, and of exerting a useful influence, upon other minds, by the full expression of the joys of a full soul. In close communion with a confidential friend, or an honestly inquiring mind, in the select prayer or class, or conference meeting, and the melting love-feast, your richest experience will have place, and will honor the Savior of a faithful witness! O what holy joy, what adoring gratitude, what longings after God, what victories of faith, mingle with such unrestrained and deep communings of soul. How much they are needed in the church of the present, to inspire and elevate the humble but fainting, and fearful. God is with us for this very purpose; "for thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

But especially must we mention, among the circumstances under which profession of holiness is made, sure and sufficient reasons for believing that we are now in that state. To make this profession, because we have once professed the blessing, because we have made it before, and have this reputation to maintain, or as a

habit, and matter of course, must be highly dangerous, must indeed lead to fearful presumption, and condemnation. Much careful self-examination,—much humble prayer, and the inward witness of the Holy Spirit clearly uttered, should precede and accompany this high profession. We mean not that we should make this preparation in the spirit of unbelief, and thus invite the triumph of our enemy; but in humble sincerity, and in holy conquering faith, we should clearly ascertain the facts before we mention what they are. A quiet, constant resting in God, will make this easy; may, even prepare you at any time, after a moment's attention to your inward consciousness and the divine teaching, to say with living confidence, the blood of Jesus cleanseth now from all sin. But if you have been unfaithful, if you have given occasion to honest minds to doubt your purity, or spiritual power, beware how you suddenly resolve to claim this exalted state. There is danger to the cause, there is danger to the church in such inconsiderate rashness. May heaven save you from it; and especially may you be spared the necessity of doubt which such unfaithfulness originates.

3. How shall this profession be made? There is an important sense in which the life is to bear testimony to the state of the heart. The Savior was distinguished for the profession of action. "The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." In this let him be our model. St. James makes a distinct announcement of this principle. "I will show you my faith by my works." And no mode of profession can supersede this. The whole life must be in harmony

with the state of purity and love supposed. It is a telling profession, to show everywhere, amidst all the provocations of a fallen state, an eye single to the glory of God; the deadness to the world that a full consecration implies; the calmness of a faith that never wavers; a religious power that connects your breathing devotions with the throne of God; a purity that rebukes "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," and reveals in all their fulness "the fruits of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Nothing can resist the power of such profession, and we wish to give it prominence here. But the words of our lips, as we have seen, must utter the experience of the soul; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringforth good things: and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shall be justified, and by thy words thou thalt be condemned." Mark hence, that the words are evidence of the state of the heart. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." But besides, how emphatically is it stated that "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh!" speaketh undoubtedly, of what is in the heart; and how if the heart abounds,—is filled to overflowing with "perfect love," can the mouth fail, in some way to express it. It is precisely thus that "the good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things."

The language of profession is safest when nearest the language of the Bible. The very "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," are less likely to mislead, and, as it seems to us, more properly expressive of humility, than any others. But surely there is no authority for shutting up any man to any one particular form of expression. As diversity is the law of our intelligence, so also is it the law of taste and of habit; and as no two persons would describe a scene, or an event, in the same language, so neither can they be expected to express a feeling, a conviction, a state of inward experience, in the same way. Some are free and fearless in the utterance of anything that they are sure is true; others are timid and doubtful, but overcome their timidity by the power of triumphant faith. The latter will however be more cautious in the statement of experience than the former. They may fear that the words even of Scripture are too strong, and they may seek to give outward expression to the inner life, in language subdued and humble. Let no one on this account reject their testimony. If it is real, though it should be indirect, it may yet honor the truth and commend to all who hear, the great reality. Inferential testimony alone, if it be conclusive, such as can only be explained by the fact of "a clean heart," may be as convincing to some minds, both as to the fact and the privilege, as the boldest form of experience of which language is capable. We are very far from insisting upon a merely mechanical or outward conformity in modes of expression, or assuming that none but those who are able to assert in so many words that they are sanctified wholly, are to be regarded as really so. While we deem it compatible with the very purest humility, for one who

has the evidences we have mentioned, to say "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth 'me' from all sin," we deem it a clear testimony to the same thing, for one with the same evidence, to say, I am wholly the Lord's; I have given up the world; I am filled with pure love; I am waiting for my Master to call me home; "I am now ready to be offered." Only let not the choice of words amount to an actual or virtual denial of the work, or a refusal to bear the responsibility of this "high and holy calling." We must again urge that he who should willingly decline to use words which would own the work truly done, or use such words as would be calculated, and knowingly allowed to mislead the listener, would not in this be truly humble—would not represent his Master, would not honor the truth-telling spirit within him; nay, he would greatly endanger his acceptance with God, and presently find that he had need of pardon and restoring grace. How can we fail to see that it is the truth that is due; the exact truth; and, so near as we can express it, the whole truth; in whatever language we may use for the purpose?

Finally, we would attach the utmost importance to the spirit in which all this is done. To everything that savors of self-congratulation,—of personal consequence,—of vain-glorious boasting, there are the most absolute objections. Such a manner tells but too plainly that the man is really self-deceived, and has nothing of peculiar sanctity to express. O, let him be warned of his danger before he further dishonors the sacred cause he professes to advance! His heart should glow with a depth of humility, and a purity of love, that would forever save him from so grave an error. The soul wholly sanctified,

has nothing to say in honor of himself. His profession only differs from that of ordinary Christians in that he says more of Christ. He has more to say, for Christ has done more for him. Indeed, the genuineness of a true profession of this superior grace, has no one characteristic more distinct and unmistakable, than that, in word, in spirit, and in manner, it exalts Christ. It shows the power of his blood, the efficacy of his merits, the condescension of his love, the glory of his holiness. In the membership as well as in the ministry, it expressly says, "But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Against the profession of perfect love in this spirit, who has ought to object? If any, let him first seek with all his heart, till he obtains this "pearl of great price;" let him experience the purifying baptism of the Holy Ghost; let his heart melt with hallowed love, and glow with sacred fire; let him feel the sweet simplicity, the holy joy, the triumphing faith of a perfect Christian; and then let him read over again, what we have written, and we shall be glad to see him, or hear from him in any way, that we may profit by the light of his experience, and the soundness of his instructions.

We have thus concluded the chapter in which we have sought to express the true counsels of the central idea of Christianity. Whatever we have said must be tried by this criterion. It can only be true, as it is in harmony with the fact, that the production of holiness, in heart and life, is the grand aim of the Christian scheme.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CENTRAL IDEA IN ITS APPEALS.

SEC. I. APPEAL TO PROFESSORS OF PERFECT LOVE.

FIRST: TRIALS AWAIT YOU.

You are doubtless aware that the devil is still your enemy. He is surely not less so from the fact that you have utterly rejected him, and consecrated yourselves wholly to the Lord. Indeed, if before the moment of complete salvation he had reasons for malice and alarm, he has much stronger ones since. Hence those feelings of dismay, of "heaviness through manifold temptations," which sometimes beset you with peculiar power when you are aware of no disobedience, when you have been living closely with God.

1. But especially your faith will be tried. The direct point of union between your consecrated souls and God, is firm trust in the "blood that cleanseth from all sin." It is therefore not unlikely that this will be early and artfully assailed. Before you are aware of the cause, you will be conscious of a suspicion, that the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood is not what you have supposed it to be. When you feel that you have nothing else to depend upon, that you have great need

of present help and support, you will perhaps feel a hesitancy in trusting in Christ. You will be conscious of an effort to do it, and it will require some time, and possibly a struggle in prayer, before this sense of complete reliance is restored. You will probably not at first feel inclined to doubt the general efficacy of the atonement. But the query will be, does it avail for me? Now, at this moment, may I claim it as my own? Would it not be presumption? I am so unworthy; I have been so imperfect. Even when in sincere purpose I have been entirely devoted to God, my failures have been so numerous, so evident to others, can I venture to trust in this blood for present entire sanctification? I fear to do it! At least, I must have time to reflect and improve before I can venture! And if you yield thus far, you will find yourself inclined to go further. The suggestion will assume a bolder form. Can any blood cleanse sinful man? At all events are not most, or even all of those who think they are cleansed from all sin, mistaken? And at best, must it not require time, long continued sorrow, long and severe self-discipline, great power of pious habit, before any work of grace can wholly purify the soul?

But, brethren, beware. Here is a plain denial of the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of his blood. It seems plausible at first; the veriest humility indeed! But it is certainly a suggestion of the devil. What! is this a limited atonement? Must we depend partly upon this and partly upon something else, for full redemption? Does it avail for me at one time, and not at another? Who says this? God does not. The Bible does not. Experience does not. Surely none but the deceiver

can originate so unworthy a suggestion. The testimony of eternal truth is, that the blood of Christ is precisely the demand of justice, the full demand, at all times, for all persons. True, the condition must be met. But the question is not, whether this blood will cleanse those who reject it, who do not apply it, who do not "walk in the light, as God is in the light," who do not confess their need of it. It is simply and exclusively whether it avails for me if I do trust it? Whether, if by a true evangelical faith I take it now, just as I am, without reservation for my sanctification, it really is so? Whether if I walk in the light, the blood does verily now cleanse me from all sin? God forbid that I should doubt it! If I do, I cannot refer that doubt to any want of power in the infinite Savior, to any limit to the merit of his blood, to any want of veracity in him, to any intimation in his holy word. It is false—maliciously and dangerously false. It can have but one origin. It is a temptation. It is a trial of faith. It should be recognized as such instantly, and by an act of the will, the very thought should be dashed aside. The tempter may be foiled by seizing some precious promise, and presenting it to the throne, and holding it there with steady hand until you feel it is redemeed.

But here will arise a modified form of the temptation. One promise after another is suggested and laid aside. This, says the tried spirit, is very precious, but it is not for me! Nor this! Nor this! And so on until all that come to mind are exhausted! And at last there arises a general fear that the whole system will prove a failure! The suggestion is distinct and alarming,—

"These assurances will never be realized!" What surer evidence can there be that this doubt is false, than that it questions the word of Jehovah? It certainly comes from the father of lies. We must contradict it. The veracity of God cannot fail. He does redeem all his promises. The experience of thousands attests it. And it is a grievous sin to hearken and yield to this temptation. No marvel that he who does it, is so soon prostrate in the mire. The devil has charged God falsely, and one of his own dear children has credited the charge! adopted it! vouched for it! Alas for our weakness! Alas for our folly! Unbelief, the most unreasonable, the most ruinous of all our sins, and yet the most common, the most probable. How much more consistent with our own ignorance, with true humility of heart, to say, in firm sincerity,

> "Lord, I believe thy every word,
> Thy every promise true;"

and we can believe it. We can see that every promise is true. Indeed we are convinced of its truth, by the reason which has grasped a revelation, by the impressions of the eternal Spirit on our souls, by the living words spoken in our hearts, by a thousand redemptions of his sacred pledges to our own spirits. It is only by bewildering temptations direct from Satan, that the holy Christian can be induced to falter in his faith. Confusion of mind brings on darkness and fear, and the word verily believed is not voluntarily trusted,—the Savior accredited, is not freely and fully relied upon. But it is in no sense necessary to fall at this point. Let the soul be alive to recognize the tempta-

tion; let it instantly assert that whatever doubts the word of God is false,—that whatever shakes the faith in the present available truth of Jehovah's promise is from beneath; let the eye be fixed upon the sprinkling blood,—the prayer be breathed to Heaven for help,—remembering above all that blessed word, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you; draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."

But in connection with this trial of your faith in the efficacy of the blood and the verity of the word, will come the artful suggestion that you are not sanctified wholly,—that you have somehow forfeited the blessing, or that you prematurely believed at first, and hence have been deceived yourselves, and have deceived others by false testimony. Now we do not mean that every conviction that you are not holy, is a temptation,—that every fear as to the present or past, is necessarily an ungrounded fear. For doubtless it may in some instances be true, that the blessing has been lost, and that it has been claimed where it did not exist. All cases of this kind can be traced and identified, and have their remedy. But apply the tests. We address those who profess the great blessing, and would assist them in guarding against a snare of the devil. Is the thought accompanied by a desire of evil,—a desire to seek gratification in some forbidden object—a secret wish that you had never taken the responsibilities of a holy life upon you,—that you might somehow be honorably discharged from them? Then you have reason to fear. Whatever may have been your former state, you are now doubtless without the evidence of entire consecration. You can probably remember some instance of

yielding when you were tried,—of unbelief which grieved the Holy Spirit—and perhaps of some bolder form of sin which has shorn you of your strength. O repent, and hasten again to the sacred fountain. May God help you. Redeem your solemn vows before it is too late.

But on the contrary, is this suggestion a source of grief to you? Do you feel that if it should prove to be true, it would rob you of your chief glory; that it is directly against all the desires and inclinations of your soul; that, whether true or false, you would not for the world distrust your Savior, or grieve his Holy Spirit; that whether for life or death your all is still the Lord's, and, whatever is the issue, no word of your solemn vow which consecrated all to God shall ever be revoked? Then "thank God and take courage." You are only walking through the fire, and if there be no shrinking "when you are tried, you shall come forth as gold." You deceived in the faith that you are wholly the Lord's, when you have been distinctly conscious of a divine testimony to the fact, and are actually bringing forth the scriptural fruits of perfect love! Deceived in claiming "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace" when you rely wholly upon the merits of Christ and the promise of his word for this very thing! Deceived in obeying the divine command, "Reckon ye yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," when you shrink from the very thought of sin as from deadly poison, and your whole soul is absorbed in doing the will and promoting the glory of God! Impossible. Lie low at the Savior's feet till the storm is over-past. Watch closely the

motions of your own spirit, and of the Spirit of God. You will feel the witness in the very midst of the temptation, and triumph in the very face of the foe. As to the past, have no argument with the devil. You live by the moment; your present consecration, your present acceptance, your present witness, is all you need. Be content with that; it would be enough to complete the bliss of an archangel. The past is with God; there leave it with filial confidence. The devil, who would defraud you of your present treasure, would certainly misrepresent all that has been done to obtain it.

One other form of this trial we feel bound to mention. Where the tempter cannot unsettle the present, nor destroy the past, he makes desperate exertions to overcast the future with clouds of darkness. He starts the suspicion that our weakness will some time yield; but this is all idle. The one good and reliable rule of living by the moment will destroy the temptation. He suggests that the cause of experimental holiness cannot succeed,—that it is unpopular,—that special attempts to promote it destroy the influence of men,—that possibly its friends have acted unwisely in bringing it so prominently forward, and thus exposing it to the special assaults of the world—that a more discreet policy is much easier for us, and more useful in the end! Alas! what a concatenation of misrepresentations is here! And yet we seriously fear that many of our dear brethren are yielding to the fatal delusion. What if it be unpopular? Is not that an evidence in its favor? Make holiness too prominent! It is that one blessing and life "without which no man shall see the Lord." Expose it to the attacks of the world! It is the grand element of our

moral power. Easier to propose and be responsible for a lower standard! Yes, if we call a compromise with the devil ease. Will never succeed! Then no more souls will get to heaven. Must be given up! Then the word of God must fail.

No, it will not, cannot fail. It is God's special care on earth. It is the great end of the atonement. It is the glorious work of the church. It is the centre and sun of the Christian scheme. Then "listen not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely." True, it must be slow in progress while the practical opposition to it is so immense! It is not the choice of poor blind man even if a religion is to be adopted. But it will not show passionate resentment. It will not yield to discouragement. It will bear itself meekly, but firmly, until its triumph is declared from the throne of the omnipotent Judge in the ears of an assembled world.

Such briefly are the leading temptations to which you are exposed for the trial of your faith. If you yield to them, the sacred cause will mourn; the church will feel the loss of your moral power; fearful struggles between light and darkness, hope and fear, are before you; and God's Holy Spirit will be grieved. If you bear up against them courageously, the holiest triumphs await you.

Have you endured "the trial of your faith" without yielding? If so, you have proved that it "is much more precious than of gold that perisheth;" if not—if you have at least allowed "an evil heart of unbelief," in "the blood that cleanseth," in the word that promises, in the fact of your entire sanctification, or in the final triumphs of holiness, then, alas! you will not, without recovery, share in the further trials peculiar to

this holy state. You will rather become the sources of them! And if there be no rallying of personal, appropriating faith, those children of God, with whom you have been so closely and tenderly identified in the experience and sufferings of holiness, will soon begin to feel the weight of your influence upon their tried hearts;—silently at first,—unintentionally upon your part,—only through the inferences of others, drawn from your decline, which can by no means be hid, but at length openly, and even bitterly, we fear; as it is matter of painful experience that the severest trials of these we are addressing, come from those who have at some time professed entire sanctification! If any of you are really shorn of your strength, you will have no direct interest in the cautions which follow. We must, however, in passing, beg you to think, to remember, to repent, to cry to God, to reconsecrate your all, to believe again for entire salvation, and plunge again into the open fountain.

2. But, brethren, you who have thus far "kept the faith," your Christian charity will be tried. We cannot admit, for a moment, that the great blessing you have experienced, has the slightest tendency to produce uncharitable feelings towards other Christians. It is so charged, we know; but if in any instance there has been apparent reason in the accusation, it has arisen, we are sure, either from the plain and pointed reproofs which brethren, burning with love, have felt obliged to give, to manifest "sin in believers," or backslidden professors; or from a reprehensible censoriousness, which has resulted, not from holiness, but the want of it. If there be any state in which the Christian's heart is literally

filled with that charity which "thinketh no evil," it is that of entire sanctification; and yet this very charity is destined in every case to be severely tried.

Apparent indifference, and even opposition to holiness, will try your Christian charity. You preach, for instance, with your soul penetrated with the convictions, and your heart overwhelmed with the feelings of experimental holiness. You explain to your brethren their honored privilege. You support it by the most indubitable arguments. You appeal to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of your motives. You bring into requisition the holy Scriptures, the views and experience of "the eminent dead," and the very faith of the church to which your brethren have voluntarily and solemnly subscribed; and after all no general permanent interest is awakened. Only a few are melted under the power of the truth. A smaller number still are sufficiently impressed to say a word upon the subject afterwards; whereas the great mass of church members reveal apparent contentment in a state of partial sanctification; perhaps look coolly upon your exertions for the advance of the sacred cause; give you reason to believe that they pity you for the manner in which you are wasting your efforts and influence; indicate personal aversion to you; speak triflingly of your profession in your absence, and reproachfully of your character before some, who, for kind or vicious reasons, report it to you; and finally come out in open opposition to your views and efforts, and evince, with more or less severity, the spirit of persecution to you, on the account of your determined support of the great doctrine of experimental holiness. Earnest and frequent prayers and exhortations, and

especially the declaration of experience, but increase these demonstrations.

And here comes the trial. You deeply feel that these brethren are in error. You feel that they wrong you; that they wrong the truth of God; that they wrong the church and the world; and especially that they wrong the Savior, who with affectionate entreaty offers his blood to cleanse them from all sin. You plausibly argue, that if they were Christians they would love holiness; that they could not oppose it; and it is even unaccountable that they should be indifferent to it.

But, beware; the tempter is at hand. Your Christian charity is in the furnace here. Grant, as we must, that no true Christian can voluntarily resist what he recognizes as holiness, can indulge in a persecuting spirit towards even the feeblest of Christ's "little ones," or uncharitably and wantonly sacrifice the reputation of his brother; grant, that whoever does this, reveals an unconverted or a fallen state, or destroys his justification before God, and that there are many such among those whose relations to the work of holiness even now so strongly tax your charity; yet allow us humbly to submit; you cannot certainly know the motives of men. God has not made you a "judge over them." Nay, he has expressly forbidden you to judge. You, most of all, should heed that peremptory command of the Savior, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Be assured there is nothing incompatible with this high behest in that other declaration, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Observe; "ye shall know them," (false prophets,) which may not require that you should "judge" and denounce them; besides, "fruits" which show

them to be really bad men, must not mean any merely accidental or isolated facts in their history. A uniformly bad and unholy life alone, in the midst of flattering words and high professions of goodness, would show them to be the "wolves in sheep's clothing," to whom our Savior referred, and of whom he bade his disciples "beware." But such surely are not our dear brethren in the church of God.

So far should we be in any truly Christian state from allowing hasty conclusions against those who oppose us, that we should seek with anxious care to account for their positions upon other principles. May there not be something in us that in part explains their aversion to the experience we recommend—some want of meekness under trials, of humility in prosperity, of gentleness in our manners, or kindness and sympathy in our mode of teaching the truth? Or if we have in no sense sinned in these particulars, still must we not admit that there is enough of general infirmity and of peculiar weakness about each of us to excuse, to some extent, though not justify, the criticisms practised upon us? And must it not be confessed that there are few of us who exhibit so uniformly the holy power of perfect love, as to place our position utterly beyond the reach of cavil? May not some of our brethren really and from honest hearts differ from us in relation to the mode of teaching and promoting the doctrine, and hence place themselves in apparent opposition to the cause of holiness, while in reality they are in favor of it, and opposed only to what they deem our peculiarities? We are persuaded that this is the case with thousands; and if so, it would be a grievous wrong to condemn them

as apostates, or refuse to acknowledge them as in any sense coadjutors in the great work of "spreading scriptural holiness over these lands."

And suffer us in all kindness to suggest, that, in very many instances, this apparent or real opposition to active and specific efforts for the promotion of holiness as a separate blessing, may be accounted for in various ways, which will leave ample ground for confidence in the piety of our brethren. Poor human nature is very weak and erring, with the best of intentions; and whatever of this great evil may be set down to this fact, will save our mutual Christian confidence. Besides, these masses are confessedly sanctified but in part, and what more natural than that remaining corruptions should tend to the very results of which we complain? What more natural than that the burning truths poured upon the souls still unsanctified, should rouse more or less of resistance? In such a state, the first instinct is self-defence, vindication, and even resentment! It furnishes indeed sad evidence of the truth of the doctrine, and of the necessity of effort, but it may not prove these persons in a state of unpardoned guilt. They doubtless often condemn themselves for all this folly, repent of it in deep anguish of spirit, secretly before God; and yet, perhaps, ere they are aware of it, detect themselves in framing theories of holiness, accomodating to their condition, and persuading themselves to believe that there is something forbidding, injurious and unnecessary in any specific and formal efforts to promote entire sanctification. Even in your own past experience, it is not unlikely you may find some reason for a charitable construction of this dreadful evil. It is

probable that your own minds have, at different times, even in a truly converted state, felt more or less of this very aversion, and been guilty of these same inconsistencies; if not, you have special reasons to thank God for the grace that has saved you from them.

We have said these things, not to convince you that all your opponents are true and honest Christians; for alas! we are very well aware that this cannot be claimed. Doubtless, many oppose holiness because they hate it, and oppose you, because they know and feel that you represent it; but surely no member of the church of God ought, upon slight grounds, to be charged with so heinous a crime; and it may be safely assumed, that where such depravity exists, it will show itself also in other ways, and by some means attract the attention of those who are responsible for the discipline of the church.

Nor would we wish to diminish your aversion to sin even in others, or to a love of sin wherever it may be found. To inspire charity for what is wrong in itself, or dangerous in its tendency, especially if it is found in the church, is no part of our object. Against every thing of this kind, those who are perfect in love must, upon all proper occasions, bear a decided and unflinching testimony; and even when disapprobation may not express itself directly in words, the life, the spirit, the countenance must be an unequivocal reproof to all attempts, formal or otherwise, at compromise with the devil. The danger of quiet, and of all efforts to evade responsibility, in an unsanctified state, must be pressed home upon the hearts and consciences of our brethren, "whether they will hear or forbear." This is no time

for indecision. To give even an implied approval or consent to the indifference or opposition of the church or individual, to the experience and spread of holiness, would bring evil upon your own conscience which you would be unable to bear.

But we have made these suggestions to show that you may be saved the pain,—the wrong of sweeping condemnations, by sound thinking, by careful analysis of character, by the true authority of history, and by the light shed upon the ways of even regenerated men, by the word of God. We wish to guard brethren against general conclusions adverse to the piety of individuals, from the simple fact, that they do not harmonize with them. God is, we trust, graciously carrying on a work in their hearts, which will finally remove all their inward aversion to the thing itself, and to all scriptural modes of promoting it; and however much you may condemn their course, you will surely not be uncharitable to them; you will rather rejoice to believe that there is much good being done, besides that which is done by the special advocates for present distinct action in favor of holiness; and if men will not go as far in doing good as they ought to, you will bid them God-speed as far as they do go. You shall thus disarm prejudice, or at least clear your own souls. Are any among you inclined to despair of the goodness of all who blindly resist this work? allow us to hope that these cautions may not prove in vain. Your Christian charity is passing a severe ordeal. It may be destined to something severer still; but "You will come forth as gold." You will pity where you cannot approve. You will grieve over those whose lives, as a whole, compel you to think

them destitute of true piety. You will charitably distinguish between the resistance made to your particular mode of promoting holiness, and opposition to the work itself. You will carefully and rigidly scrutinize your own hearts and lives,—your modes of doing your heaven-commissioned work, to see how much there may be calculated to discredit it, and what you can lay aside as needlessly offensive. You will sincerely rejoice in all the good you find in those who oppose you, and in all the good they may do to the souls of others. You will yield nothing of the great fundamental truths of the gospel to the demands of men, even Christian men. You will compromise no duty. You will remit no efforts to urge forward the glorious work of entire salvation from sin to gratify your dearest friend or bitterest enemy. To all unmerited condemnation let every true Christian reply, "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self; for I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." Let all heed the injunction: "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart."

3. Your Christian patience will be tried. "In your patience possess ye your souls," is an inspired direction given because it is needed. No Christian can be innocently fretful. Not even natural disposition can be an excuse for it. It always includes more or less of untruthfulness, of exaggeration, of censoriousness. It engenders "anger, malice, strife, and every evil work." Those

who give way to it, however great the provocation, must mourn the hidings of the divine countenance—must lament in bitterness so great a folly, or soon be numbered with apostates.

But you, who are wholly consecrated to God, cannot be impatient even in feeling without the greatest danger. It is no doubt greater harm to speak complainingly and censoriously, than to have the feeling and suppress it; for if you indulge in such language even to your dearest friends, you will start suspicion in relation to your profession; and much more will the sacred cause be wounded in the presence of enemies, or of those who look with doubt upon the doctrine, the experience, and the profession of holiness. But have you not sometimes thought that the feeling of impatience if it be suppressed is wholly innocent? Beware, brethren. Precisely here is the snare of the devil. When your evidence of perfect love is clear, and your soul is complete in all the will of God, do the petty annoyances of life affect you? Can you not endure even the most unreasonable provocations from servants, friends, or enemies, in perfect calmness? Make the very sweetness of your temper and the gentleness of your manner, a powerful rebuke to sin, and a palliative to the misfortunes of those around you? But if you are conscious of something more than inward sorrow for the wrongs that others inflict upon you and upon themselves,—of something different from the purest love to those who annoy you,—if you feel your dissatisfaction with them so great as to incline you to repay them for the trouble they have made you, to annoy them in return, to resent your injuries, though you do not utter a complaining word, you may be sure something is wrong. It is the heart, the

inner man, upon which the eye of God is fixed. True, the connection between the feelings and the words, the thoughts and the actions, is so close that they are not easily separated. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and "he that offendeth not in word nor in tongue, the same is a perfect man." You will, therefore, not long retain the feelings of resentment with which the enemy has inspired you within your own breast. Your countenance, your movements, your tones of voice, and finally, your words, will show that you are inwardly wrong. O the calmness of love! The sweetness and power of purity! But this rich and heavenly grace cannot be left to itself. In this world of sin it must be severely tried. The rashness of friends and the virulence of foes will attack it. The want of harmony around you will powerfully tend to unsettle the harmony within. Worn and exhausted vital energies will expose it. Enfeebled and irritable nerves will surely try it. Through all these, and a thousand nameless ills, the tempter will assault a meek and quiet spirit. But if you keep your unity with Christ, if in all this you have no other will than the will of God, the temptation will fail. You may be conscious of inward pain, but not of resentment; of inward grief, but not of anger; of the strongest disapprobation, but not of ill-will. Love, deep and melting love, will pervade the soul under the keenest sufferings, and the severest provocations. It will illuminate the countenance, sweeten the temper, soften the words, and throw a charm over the scenes of wretchedness itself! It is well to guard against the assaults of the enemy made directly by whispers of evil when none but spirits are near you, or indirectly through persons

and things around you. Indeed you must "watch," or be taken by surprise. The great security, however, is in living faith that renounces self, and casts the soul wholly upon the Lord.

But the patience of the wholly sanctified is destined to other trials. When the clear light breaks in upon the soul, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost resolves all doubts, and reduces the whole problem of Christian perfection to complete simplicity, we feel that the work is easy for all the church of Christ. We think it can be readily explained. We hope soon to induce others to accept the same relief from the evils of a divided heart, and even expect to see the work of holiness spreading like a flame throughout the land. But alas! the trial soon shows the intractableness of the materials, and the unskilfulness of the workmen. The tears which gush out in response to deep-felt sympathy and melting love soon dry up. The confidence you have inspired is soon followed by suspicion, neglect, and finally opposition; and the amazing truth comes home to your hearts with the most pungent sorrow that you are destined to general defeat; that only a few will be fully roused and brought into the perfect liberty of holiness; that some of these will soon become inconsistent in life, and treacherous in heart, and join the ranks of opponents; that neither a year nor an age will suffice "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." And then comes on the discouragement. The temptation falls upon the soul with fearful power, it is all a failure! We can't succeed! The church will go on in its worldliness until awaked by the trump of judgment! The little that we can do is of no avail, and we may as well give

over our efforts, do what we can in the ordinary way, and trouble ourselves no further! Here again is the fatal snare. Alas, brethren, whence do you get this suggestion? Does God say so? Does he say, I have tried for years to make men holy, and have only succeeded in a few instances, I will therefore give it up? Does the Savior make the difficulties of his undertaking the reason for abandoning it? No. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged until he have set judgment in the earth." You will never be fully like your Master until you can learn to both work and wait—work as though the salvation of the world depended upon your efforts, and wait as though it were a most willing life-labor to be the means of saving a single soul; "knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

4. Your Christian firmness will be tested. The apparent want of success will try it. How often has it already been suggested to you to detach yourself from a cause that is so unpopular! Better to abandon an enterprise that meets with so little favor from the mass of professing Christians, and from which you can see so little evident fruit. And neglect will try your firmness. Your preaching, your exhortations, your personal entreaties to awake to the necessity of holiness, will be heard with indifference, or, if felt for the time, will not generally be acted upon. If you introduce the subject in private conversation, it will soon be superseded by something else, and thus you will be tempted to yield the point and say no more. Sometimes also you will meet with direct opposition,—opposition in doctrine, in

experience and practice,—perhaps from those who have been baptized in the faith of the church, who have avowed before the altar of God their belief in the power of Christ to cleanse from all sin, who have solemnly affirmed that they "expected to be made perfect in love in this life, and were then groaning after it!" But will you give it up? When you first read, in the word of God, "it is his will even your sanctification," did you say, I will believe this until some of my brethren deny it or explain it away? When you first began to cry out, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," did you add, if it shall be found popular to have clean hearts? When you made your consecration, was it with the reservations of expediency? When you first lifted up your voice and cried to the church, "Be ye holy for God is holy," was it with the intention to desist as soon as it should appear that only a few would heed the solemn appeal? No, verily. Then you would have been ashamed at the very thought of such gross inconsistency. Why then do you now tremble to find yourself so nearly alone? Why are you now secretly looking out for a way of retreat when the battle begins to rage? O, "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage." "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you;" for really it cannot be denied that to many pro-

fessors of perfect love this language is exactly appropriate.

5. In the struggle in which you have engaged, your perseverance will be severely tested. Have you not marked how many who have entered the path of holiness have finally abandoned it? Have you not seen how many have brought disgrace upon this sacred profession by their inconsistencies, by their want of sound discretion, by their instability? Has not your heart been grieved by the sad exposures of this holy cause from the infidelity of its friends? And will you add one more to the number of the unfaithful? God forbid it. Is it not true that God requires holiness, that he holds it out to every believer by the most charming promises of the gospel? Is it not true that the large majority of real Christians are yet without it, that in consequence of its neglect the church is loaded with a body of death filled with backsliders, and comparatively powerless for the great purpose to which she is ordained of Heaven? Is it not true that, by keeping silence, by waiving the claims of entire sanctification, you may deprive many of the advantage of your experience, deaden the work in your own soul, and finally lose your evidence as others have done? For Christ's sake, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."

SECOND ; HOLINESS MUST NOT BE TAKEN OUT OF ITS PROPER CONNECTIONS.

That there is a tendency to this, can hardly be denied. When we are thoroughly roused by the Spirit of God, from a state of comparative indifference to lively Christian activity, and enter upon a course of searching inquiry into the deficiencies of the past, and the depth and extent of our privilege, as a natural and first effect, we sink amazingly in our own eyes ; and happy for us if, through the device of the devil, the work of God already done in our hearts, and still in progress, does not go down with self! Surely, we are in great danger of blindness here. Many have been the sufferers who, in the very struggle for "a clean heart," have been led to depreciate their past religious experience, until they grieved the Spirit, and reached a state of complete despair. But if the soul escapes this snare and the work goes on, the glory of holiness becomes entirely absorbing. Oh, how deep, and rich, and full its blessings. Completely enamored with its charms, and awed by its overpowering grandeur, one may very well say,—give me this, and I want nothing besides It is not wonderful that, in such a state, this one object should completely occupy the mind. And when this absorbing desire is gratified, the danger is not entirely past. We do not mean the danger of over-estimating the grace of perfect love. This, we are sure, is impossible. We mean simply the danger of making it the whole of the Christian scheme. It is doubtless the very centre and soul of the scheme,—the grand aim of remedial love in reference to sinners. But it is not the whole. Other

fundamental principles, however accessory and subordinate to this, have their place in the system,—their importance to the unconverted, to the justified, and to the wholly sanctified—their demands upon us, upon all, for attention, enforcement, and defence.

If now, as ministers or members of the church, we should become so entirely engrossed with the charms of perfect love as to lose sight of its accessories—if our minds should be so occupied with the one thought—the one doctrine, vast and comprehensive as it is, that we could preach upon no other theme, converse or pray only about holiness, the precious truth would doubtless suffer in our hands. We do not believe the many are liable to fall into this error Far otherwise. It must rather be confessed with sorrow that much the greater numbers are in danger of the opposite extreme ;—that they do not feel the charm of Christian purity drawing them for months, and even years together, to preach a single sermon or speak upon its distinctive character and claims ;—that numerous Christians and large congregations are permitted to sit under the ministry for many years, perhaps for life, without being impressed even once with the glorious truth that entire deliverance from sin in this life is their blood-bought privilege, their indispensable duty. This undoubtedly is the great evil of the pulpit and the church. But for the present we address a different class—a class to whose course and bearing we attach the greater importance, from the very fact that it is small. Indeed, it would seem that the church cannot well bear the misdirection of the smallest part of those labors which are especially designed to promote experimental holiness. To aid one beloved

brother, who has to any extent impaired his usefulness by becoming, in an unfortunate sense, a man of one idea, in recovering from this dangerous tendency, would, as we believe, be a work of incalculable usefulness.

Let us then with great plainness point out the indications of this error. You have proved by blessed experience the power of holiness. Of course you love it. The theme attracts you wherever mentioned. A sermon in which it is truthfully presented,—a prayer in which it is earnestly asked,—a conversation in which it is sincerely discussed,—or a book in which it is clearly explained and ably enforced, has, for that very reason, a special interest for you; and the more so as you meet with so little of this, and so much of everything else. This is unquestionably right. Would that a similar love of holiness pervaded the whole church. But, if now you detect in yourself a secret disrelish for any other theme,—if you perceive a lurking desire to avoid delivering or hearing those discourses which dwell upon any of the innumerable other Bible topics, which, though intimately related to this one, are in some sense distinct from it,—if you are conscious of an aversion to experience, though sincerely related, which falls short of the highest standard revealed in the gospel, or a general distrust of the religion of those who make no special efforts for the promotion of holiness,—if you feel an inaptitude,—an inward disqualification for labors that aim directly at the hearts of sinners,—that seek their awakening and conversion, the reclamation of backsliders, the confirming of the weak and the growth in grace, however gradual, of the truly regenerated; if any of these or kindred tendencies begin to develop them-

selves to your consciousness, then be on your guard. Precisely here is the snare of the devil.

To any who may be thus enticed we beg leave most affectionately to submit the following suggestions:

1. These feelings of aversion are clearly wrong. You once felt them to be so. At their first appearance they startled you. You cried out to God against them,—struggled against them and got the mastery over them. But since, they have seemed more plausible, and you may have even admitted them into the elements of your religion, and persuaded yourself that you were greatly subserving the cause of holiness, by giving to it your exclusive attention, and virtually proscribing every thing else! Alas! my brother, see what these things are to which you have acquired this aversion;—feeling for sinners—"exhorting, entreating, rebuking with all long-suffering and patience,"—"supporting the weak,"—"raising up the bowed-down—holding up the feeble hands and confirming the feeble knees, strengthening the things that remain that are ready to die"—the very work in which your blessed Master was engaged while on earth, and is to this hour, and which he has entrusted to his church. Surely you will not permit the existence of this feeling of exclusiveness, opposed directly, as it is, to the humane and heavenly mission of our holy Christianity.

2. It is inconsistent with the claims of holiness which demands only its own position. It supersedes no doctrine of the gospel. It is instead of no other work of grace. It acknowledges the atonement, conviction, repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, adoption, sanctification commenced, and growth in grace. Nay,

more. It depends upon all these. It cannot exist without them, and hence requires its advocates to bend their energies, to a very large extent, to the work of producing and maintaining them. As the grand preliminaries to entire sanctification, they must be insisted upon. Holiness is offered directly to but few. The great mass of the world cannot receive it. An immense previous work must be accomplished before it would be of any avail to urge upon them the doctrine of holiness. And this previous work is of the utmost importance in itself, and in its relation to the sanctified state. No well instructed advocate of holiness can therefore be devoted directly only to that work. The claims of holiness extend in the fullest degree to the preparation of men for its experience, as well as to the completion of the work in the hearts of true believers.

3. There is danger in the spirit which we wish in all humility to guard against,—danger to the soul that entertains it; as its immediate effect is to destroy the basis of his own experience and produce uncharitable tempers,—danger to the souls of others whose salvation from the guilt of sin is thus neglected,—and danger to the cause; for its enemies wield these inconsistencies against its advocates and against the cause itself. So soon as any of us can patiently speak of and hear nothing else, then we cease to be respectfully and profitably heard upon this subject.

These remarks we have addressed to the few who are in danger. Let no one charge these errors upon the professors of holiness generally. They understand their calling better, and seek to check the first beginnings of exclusiveness, though they originate in the very ardor

of love for this glorious grace. They may be depended upon to labor anywhere, and with due regard to circumstances, for the promotion of the whole and every part of the Christian scheme.

THIRD: BEWARE OF SCHISM.

This caution may startle you. You will say at once, "Schism in the body of Christ is a crime—a grievous offence against God and man, of which we would no more be guilty than of blasphemy. It separates the hearts of brethren. It stirs up jealousy, pride and strife, making enemies of friends." It will therefore surprise you to see that you are thought to be in danger from a spirit that is, in every respect, so utterly foreign from that of perfect love! But, brethren, let us lie low, and humbly inquire at the foot of the cross. We may detect evil where we least suspect it, and you are not afraid to know the truth. You do not start back indignantly at the intimation that the arts of your tempter may lead your poor weak human nature astray, and scornfully refuse to investigate. No. God forbid. All this belongs to the unsanctified heart. Your very profession implies that you are teachable as a child.

All evil, to be understood and avoided, must be traced to its source. The beginnings of a vice may be tolerated, and at length cordially entertained, by those who would shrink with horror from its developments. Let us, therefore, search for the origin of schism in the church, and see whether we can discover any thing against which we have reason to guard.

1. Differences in doctrine may lead to division in feeling and in action. Indeed, it cannot have escaped the notice of even superficial observers, that those who have the same views of the great truths and minor details of the gospel,very naturally adhere to each other. Hence it is that brotherly love is easier between members of the same, than of different denominations. Similarity of opinion, perhaps more than any thing else, groups men naturally together in separate church organization. Hence, when they begin to differ upon those points which harmonize them, they feel the tendency to separate. If issues are made, and controversy arises, the danger of alienation increases, until, from this cause alone, all the dreaded evils of a torn and distracted church may arise.

Now, history shows that we are at all times liable to this, and that caution is always appropriate. But let us examine our special exposures from different views of the doctrine of holiness. We have observed with some concern an increasing disposition to derive or modify our opinions from the cast of our own minds. To some, the idea of any separate and special attention to the work of holiness is disagreeable, and hence the tendency to magnify all the evils which have been incidentally connected with such efforts. Indeed, the decided influence of this feeling of aversion, in producing the opinion that sanctification and regeneration are identical,—that no Christian has need of being cleansed from impurities, cannot be doubted by a logical mind or a careful observer. This same reluctance to act may account also for the opinion that, though the work of sanctification is not completed in conversion, its progress and perfection are

implied and secured in the converted state, without fixing the eye upon it,—without hungering and thirsting after it,—without praying, agonizing and believing for it;—that with ordinary faithfulness the work will be gradually, but imperceptibly accomplished, and that it is useless, nay, even vicious, to think of it, speak of it, labor for it distinctively.

On the other hand, an individual filled with the joy of perfect love may feel a strong security against the power of sin. He sees nothing in his own heart that can permit affinity with the devil; and, taking his principles from the cast of his own mind, he believes that there is a state of grace which is beyond the reach of contingency, and thus looks upon all acquisitions less than this as defective Christianity.

Now, the source of all these novelties in doctrine is evidently relying upon our own minds to teach us the truth,—looking at certain facts, tendencies and preferences within,—admiring them,—supposing them to be general instead of simply special or individual, as they are, and announcing as general principles our own conceits. But the opinions of individuals formed from this variable standard are nearly as various as their numbers. Hence issue controversies and alienation of feeling, to the great injury of the church.

The Bible is the only standard of doctrine. No schism can be truly grounded in it. Let us cease from ourselves, and go to the fountain. In this way only can we see eye to eye, and save the church from hazardous speculations and experiments. Discoveries above holiness are just as dangerous and as inevitably false as discoveries below it. Innovations which claim to free

humanity from its frailties, its liabilities to error, and its exposure to sin, are as perilous to the souls of men as those which would reconcile the claims of God and the provisions of the gospel with wilful transgression, or voluntary remaining depravity. God's word gives not the slightest countenance to either, though a man's own feelings and opinions may.

Let no one say, "I cannot help my belief." Nay, but you have adopted an unauthorized standard of faith. Every one of us can, if we will, renounce this standard, and go to the living, unchangeable word. The fathers may tell us much truth, but they may also tell us error. Creeds and standard authors may be true exponents of Bible doctrine, but only so far as they are, can they be relied upon to aid our investigations, and teach us the way of full salvation. The views of the great Wesley may be regarded as a clear, safe and full exhibition of the teachings of revelation upon the great doctrine of holiness. But we dare not appeal to his writings as the authoritative teaching on this vital subject. We can claim nothing more than that he was made by the grace of God a very transparent medium through which divine light poured out from the Bible upon the world. It is only because he kept so closely to the Scriptures in his exposition of the doctrine, that so much safety, harmony and prosperity have resulted from strict adherence to his standard, and we have been involved in endless questions and imminent peril by stopping a particle below or passing a step beyond it. We say his standard—we mean nothing more nor less than the Bible. If we keep to this we may stop all our controversies, repudiate all improvements, and simply pray for, believe for, and

experience that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," and in our mission of love, "spread scriptural holiness over these lands." If we speculate, argue, and array man against man, we shall fail to experiment, and live this glorious blessing, and shall rend the body of Christ.

2. A want of charity may lead to schism. Should brethren who cannot, or do not, see alike upon the great liberty of the gospel, indulge personal aversion to each other,—should they unkindly question each other's motives or sincerity, speak lightly of their professions, or dwell upon their frailties, nothing could be more certain than distraction and ultimate serious division in the church of God. Should you, my brethren, who profess perfect love, conceive the impossibility of bringing up the great body of the church to the standard which you have reached in experience, and hence feel like giving them up, and begin practically to withdraw yourselves from them, you would inevitably bring upon yourselves the crime of schism. Any thing like the spirit, "Stand aside, I am more holy than thou," is unworthy of you—is a device of the devil to cut you off from the sympathies of the church in general, and destroy your usefulness. We do not deny that there may be society, even in the church, which you cannot intimately fellowship. We know it is possible that conduct may be tolerated by feeble and unfaithful discipline, which it will be your imperative duty, in meekness, to reprove. We are aware that there is a very important sense in which distinctness from worldly professors is indispensable to your retaining the blessing of perfect love. But surely you will not be known from

the rest by any want of Christian charity, or by anything like a spirit of proscription. This is certainly not in the grace you have professed. It is no part of it. It may be artfully made to supersede it, and you may thus become a victim to a most ruinous delusion.

True, you are to be distinct from worldly professors, but it will be by "denying yourself of all ungodliness and worldly lust, and living soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world." You must be distinct even from justified Christians, but only by being more deeply humble; by greater simplicity and sweetness of spirit; by loving them more tenderly, and laboring for them and the world more indefatigably and successfully than would otherwise be possible. Thus not schism, but strong and indissoluble Christian union, will be the result of increased attention to the doctrine of holiness.

3. Any organization of the friends of holiness as a distinct work, is highly dangerous. It must lead to invidious distinctions which are by no means intended by the friends of the measure. It must place distance, more or less, between the members of such associations and their brethren, and lead to jealousies, heart-burnings and divisions. It must cut off from the sympathies of the masses, those whose special graces are intended by our heavenly Father to be like leaven in the measures of meal,—to permeate the entire church.

The example of Mr. Wesley furnishes no precedent for such a measure; for surely there is a wide difference between the moral and religious condition of the evangelical churches of the present day, with all their imperfections, and the secular, worldly and corrupt establishment within which he formed his societies. Besides, he

organized upon no one idea, however central and controlling. His special fellowship included distinctly and professedly the whole scheme of gospel morality and piety, as every Christian fellowship should, all tending, to be sure, "to spread scriptural holiness over these lands." This very organization and other evangelical churches exist for us, rendering any other unnecessary.

As the advocates of entire sanctification, we have no new revelations for the world; no novel doctrines to advance; no startling discoveries in the means of grace. Our object is as old as the date of redemption. Our prayer for ourselves is the same as that breathed by the devout psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," —for others, identical with that of the apostle, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly;" and of the adorable Savior, "Sanctify them through thy truth,—thy word is truth." Our theory is as simple, as comprehensive, as powerful, and as true, as the apostolic announcement, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Here we have solid rock. Here let us stand against the powers of earth and hell. Don't let us add a thing—venture a single speculation, or attempt a single improvement; but exert all our energies, and all the power of our faith, to get the blood applied to our own hearts and the hearts of others. Nothing more than this, and, in the name of God, nothing less.

So shall not "our good be evil spoken of," and the doctrine of evangelical holiness preached, experienced, extended, shall prove in the future as, in its purity, it has in the past, the highest conservative power of the church.

FOURTH: THIS SACRED PROFESSION MUST BE VINDICATED.

It cannot be taken simply upon its own strength. It speaks of a work of grace so naturally improbable—so far from being true of the great mass of believers, that no mere declaration can command the faith of the world. It must be confessed that, to all but thinking minds, sound theologians, or persons of deep experience, the probabilities are against it. There is much plausibility in the thought that human depravity is so deep, so all-pervading, so concealed, and human consciousness and reason are so defective that a man may even honestly think he is cleansed from all sin when he is very far from it. Indeed, without good and sufficient sustaining evidence, the profession cannot be received. There are many known defects in human nature in its best earthly condition, which, however capable of clear and satisfactory explanation by the acute theologian, are most naturally attributed, by the world, and even professors of religion, to remaining depravity. The credibility of this great work must not, therefore, be made to rest upon *a priori* evidence. The only cause which men can see, and which they are disposed to take into the account, does not contain the alleged effect—does not suggest it, but quite the contrary. And it is not discreet to overtax the faith of men, especially of sincere men. The effect is always adverse to the intention.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that men generally are in an unbelieving state with regard to this blessing. As there is no *a priori* probability, so far as they can see, that any man is sanctified wholly, so there is no *a priori* tendency in them to believe it, upon any evidence

whatever. The minds of most men are sceptical upon this point, as upon most others, involved in experimental Christianity, not only from inward corruption, which spontaneously resists all truth, but from choice and habit. It is self-reproving to admit that a state of purity so superior to their own is practicable and within their reach—that before their eyes there are demonstrations of a power, available to all sinners, which might long since have restored them to the image of their Maker; and hence that they have assumed a fearful responsibility in remaining so long under the total or partial influence of inward sin. They choose, therefore, in self-defence to deny the fact. And this, commenced so early, has been persisted in so long, that it has become a fixed habit of the mind. It is the first result of listening to a profession of perfect love, and is so much a part of the man, that he is likely to have no idea of the sophistry he is practising upon himself. He would, it is true, be startled by the thought of denying that it is desirable to be delivered from all sin,—that it is possible,—that it is necessary; but really feels that he has no reason, even to apologize, for denying positively that any man on earth is delivered from all sin! How general this sceptical tendency is, we need not attempt to show you, brethren. You have met it everywhere. You have felt its chilling effects in the very bosom of the church. Hard enough to endure, coming from an unbelieving world, it has grieved you to the heart when you have been compelled to recognize it in the looks, the words, and the conduct of those you tenderly love in the membership, and even in the ministry.

One other consideration we must mention. There is

opposition to holiness of which its professors must become the direct objects. No man can, even as an advocate, and much less by open profession, identify himself with a cause which contains so much of reproof to sin, and which presents an antagonism so direct and palpable to the endeared vices and palliated corruptions of the world, without feeling the force of its self-respect, of its deeply rooted prejudices, and of its challenged resentment. "The world will love its own and them only." And just in proportion as we dissent from its fashionable sins, we shall provoke its resistance.

Now, to meet this opposition with mere profession—to expose ourselves to the charge of gross inconsistency, presenting no evidence of the reality which we formally claim, is not only to secure the contempt of men, but to endanger the system which we so totally misrepresent. Opposition to a mere fiction is an easy task To disprove and hold up to ridicule, claims which have no real foundation, requires no skill in logic, no deep malice at heart. But the grievous fact is, that, from precisely this position, multitudes impose upon themselves and others by arguing from the concrete to the abstract,—from the particular to the general; and hence they say, with an air of triumph, here is another demonstration of the utter falseness of this dogma of Christian perfection,—of the utter impracticability of this, as well as all other schemes of human perfectibility. Against all this, which so clearly disregards the testimony of revelation, and dishonors the Savior, it is of no use to oppose mere profession. If this is all, it is better to suffer in silence, or to be content with opposing true logic to sophistry, and battling by sound theo-

logical laws for the truth as it is in Jesus. All these facts, in the state and tendencies of the world, we adduce, not to discourage profession. Far from it. We have shown that all consistent profession of religion is an attempt, in humbleness and sincerity, to tell the truth, and the more profound and pervading the truth, the more gratefully and joyously should we tell it. We admit and even urge that we are not excused from being living witnesses to the fact that the blood of Jesus has cleansed us from all sin, by the knowledge that our testimony will be rejected,—that men will take occasion to attack, with renewed zeal and bitterness, the glorious doctrine of full salvation. Truth is not responsible for error; the right for the wrong; light for darkness. The faithfulness of the Savior, of his apostles, and martyrs was the occasion of bitter revilings, of fearful blasphemy and murder! but the cause lay deep in the hearts of corruption whence these bitter wrongs arose. No; we are to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear. With all the solemnities of sworn witnesses, we are bound at the proper time to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The testimony of the Spirit is to be honored for its own sake; and on the naked authority of this inward witness, whatever our stage of advancement, we are to tell what the Lord hath done for our souls.

But this is not our own defence. Profession is not our weapon, but the simple exposure of the object of attack. This is the thing to be vindicated against the improbabilities in the nature of the case; against the natural scepticism and the sinful opposition of men;

and the vindication is practicable; the means of successful and triumphant vindication are within our reach, and we are under the most sacred and imperative obligations to use them, for the honor of our revered principles, for the protection of our individual rights, for the deliverance of souls from the power of sophistry, the dominion of prejudice and the oppression of the devil, and for the glory of Christ, whose blood, in spite of all cavil and neglect, has power to cleanse from all sin.

1. The spirit of the sanctified must vindicate the profession. Such amazing grace cannot be hid in the heart. A light so pure, and bright, and constantly increasing, will shine out to the view of men. A tree so good will bear good fruit.

The spirit which characterizes the man wholly sanctified, is a clear and steady vindication of his profession. It is the spirit of love—of perfect love. There is a marked difference between the love which is the fruit of partial, and that which is the result of entire sanctification,—love which may co-exist or alternate with fear, and "perfect love which casteth out fear." It is much weaker, and hence more easily overcome. It is indeed warm, and fresh, and glowing, when the soul is first converted; and would seem to be able to contend with men and devils. But the time of its trial comes on. It has a rival within. Undue love of self is only conquered, not destroyed. And this springs up, with its strong importunate demands, in a thousand forms. It seeks, and, to the grief of the Spirit, not unfrequently gains, the ascendency. Love to God resists it, struggles against it, and, by the help of grace, puts it down.

Otherwise condemnation would arise. But the contest reveals the feebleness of the power. God knows how fearful, and often doubtful, is the strife,—how the soul's affections are held in equipoise, hardly knowing which way the scale will turn. The vibration is alarming, as self on the one hand, enlarges and increases in our esteem, as we gaze upon it, see its beauties, and feel its cravings, and gradually, almost imperceptibly, add the weight of consent to its demands,—and our Savior, on the other, by the charms of his character, the pleadings of his tears and blood, appeals to the heart he has claimed, and received, and renewed, for its undivided love. Who has not felt this vibration? Who has not been conscious of this rivalry within him? and the world, with its wealth, its honors, its pleasures, has come in with its claims, its demands to be loved even in comparison with God, and in opposition to him, and has found its response in the soul not sanctified wholly, conspiring with remaining love of self, to rival and overpower the Christian love which has been kindled within. It must battle moreover with the fears of the heart. The way is new, and apparently adventurous. What wonder that the unpractised Christian should fear a false step, and tremble lest a fall from this giddy height, should dash him to ruins! And the foes he must meet—alas! they are not unknown to him. Until a few days since, they were his intimate friends! The world, the flesh, and the devil—he hailed them brothers, until God opened his eyes; and he may well fear the power of their fascinating friendship. It is natural that his heart should flutter at the prospect of meeting them face to face, under solemn orders and covenant to

renounce them, and abandon them forever, despite their tantalizing smiles, and menacing frowns. And much more certainly will the spirit sink with fear for the conflict, after it has tried the power of their combined malevolence and skill, and perhaps been left again and again bleeding and dying from its wounds in the strife. This, is the revelation of its feebleness. And it must needs be further tried by "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." A fearful array of antagonist feelings will arise from within, to oppose, mingle with, and if possible overwhelm it. And the weakness and foibles of men will try it. The wickedness, the meanness, and the opposition of men will provoke it. Untoward circumstances will expose it to defeat, and even utter overthrow, while yet its habits are unsettled and its power is undeveloped.

Let now this unholy love of the creature, self, and the world, be utterly eradicated; let the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost remove all inward vileness, all resistance to divine love, all fear. Let the consecrated soul, in its intellections, its passions, and its will, become once more a unit. Let love—"perfect love"—dissolve, pervade, and control the whole man, and wield every power of body and mind, in contest with the two remaining foes, the devil and the world, now straining every nerve with tenfold energy, and you shall see what we mean by the spirit which vindicates the profession of holiness. We have now before us a realization of that matured, consolidated, and well developed power of the Christian religion, expressed in heaven's holy law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all

thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And this is the spirit which is revealed in the life.

How truthful it is in its representations of God's moral law! It proposes no amendment to that stringent code, which exacts every thought and feeling, every word and action, for the glory of God. It would abate nothing of these high demands, nor vary, in the slightest degree, the will of Jehovah. With this will it harmonizes sweetly and perfectly, though it reveals crosses, and perils, and sufferings, more terrible than ever seen before. The spirit breathed in the sanctified state says, "It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good." Under this rule, how firm and uncompromising is the soul, however constitutionally timid and shrinking, in meeting its foes, and condemning sin, in whatever form it appears, whether in "high places" or low. It is the spirit of moral heroism, which trembles at nothing but the frown of God, and turns aside for no foe, however terrific in countenance, or formidable in power.

But at the same time what meekness, what humility, what tenderness, it reveals! How conscious of the utter weakness of all human power, how utterly dependent upon the might of God, how solely confiding in the blood of Christ, and the cleansing, vitalizing energy of the Holy Spirit! No loftiness in bearing, no self-conceit in countenance, no boasting of its own purity or achievements, no severe denunciations of the less experienced children of God, nothing harsh or censorious in word or temper. Kind, and gentle, and forgiving to all, compassionate even to the vile and the ungrateful; seeking all occasions to return good for evil, and para-

lyze an enemy by the power of love. A spirit so sweet, so invariably pure, is the noblest similitude of God on earth. It is God living, and breathing, and acting in the soul of man, and through these organs of clay.

And this spirit carries itself into all the social relations and business of life. He who is thus the embodiment of love is not, it is true, the less alive to a sense of justice, is no better prepared to give his tacit sanction to the attempts of iniquity to defraud a fellow man of his equitable rights. He is not thereby slack in his estimate of business laws, or quiescent amid the arch deceptions of a grasping world. His stern love of the right, will allow of nothing which could compromise it, without firm remonstrance and vindication. But his sense of justice passes over to the account of his fellow, as well as of himself. No longer anxious to get the advantage in trade, he is as sincerely interested for the rights of the one party as the other ;—and then so transparent in his words, his looks, his actions, that he disarms suspicion, and vindicates confidence. When he meets his friends in social life, he reveals nothing of the ascetic, or the bigot, or the mere enthusiast. He is simply, there and on all occasions, a Christian—a man of God. The deep repose of his countenance shows him proof alike against the sullen gloom of monasticism, and the trifling levity of the man of pleasure. Cheerful in the enjoyment of the purest bliss and highest hopes that ever glowed in the bosom of a mortal, and solemnly earnest in the accomplishment of the loftiest mission that ever commanded the heart, or nerved the energies of mind, he diffuses everywhere joy to the good, and terror to the bad ; and all this by the spirit which God has

given him. His is the work of benevolence, in all its conditions. No form of humanity so low that he despises the priceless gem which it encloses. No labor of love so humble, so offensive to a creature of sense, so exacting upon the sensibilities of the heart, or the muscles or nerves of the body, or the means in his hands, as that he shrinks from its performance, or becomes weary of its burdens. An angel of mercy, by the couch of the sick and the dying, in the abode of poverty and helpless wretchedness, and the very hand of the church in its deep-reachings after low, degraded, but immortal man.

In the prayer meeting, in the class meeting, in the conference room, the sweetness of his spirit, the dissolving power of his love is the life and soul of the whole. Hard hearts melt under his prayers, the feeble wax strong under his exhortations, darkness flees before the burning glories of the cross, seen and felt in the spirit of the consecrated one. O, what loveliness and power it reveals! Whoever possesses this spirit may safely profess to be perfect in love.

2. Increased usefulness must vindicate this profession. We are aware that there is no coercion in religion. Mind is free, and can, if it will, resist all kinds of saving influence. Voluntary unbelief baffled the skill and power of the Savior, while upon earth; and every day, sinful men depart to hell, because they resist the Holy Ghost. Christians can never, therefore, in the absolute sense, be held responsible for the salvation of others. And yet there is ground of a most fearful responsibility, in behalf of the church and the world. If we cannot absolutely save men, we can influence their salvation, and whatever we can do, to rouse them from

their slumbers, to pour light upon their darkness, to guide them to the Savior, to secure them a home in heaven, we are bound to do. For the full extent of our possible influence over the moral destinies of the world, we shall unquestionably be held accountable at the judgment. Whatever God has given, he will undoubtedly require; and this rule is clearly applicable to those who have been washed from all impurity in the blood of the Lamb. Mark, my brethren, the divine announcement of this stern and equitable law of responsibility—"unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required."

Now, it is not mere teaching in the abstract, however correct it may be, that is the efficient instrument of salvation. More depends upon the spirit, which prompts and pervades it—upon the degree of grace, of holiness, of religious power from which it comes. Doubtless the warmth, the freshness of early love, the temperament of the individual, his talents, learning, experience, zeal, all come in to modify particular effect. But the controlling power, the grand pervading influence of usefulness, is piety; and it must be true that increase of piety, in every case, will give increased usefulness. "The tree is known by its fruit," is a divine maxim of universal application. The state of grace which you profess, if it really exist, cannot conceal itself. Its fruit will appear. "Every branch in me," saith the Savior, "that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit." We must therefore state plainly, that where no more than ordinary power of usefulness appears, when no marked religious effects are realized, there is strong reason to doubt whether entire sanctifi-

cation exists. We utter so stern a rule with trembling. We know we must be tried by it. We know not who may be cut off by it. We know not what loved ones will be thrown into agonizing doubt by it. God forbid that it should do harm. We would not write it, if we did not feel that its truth imperatively controls us.

But let us see. You are supposed to have greatly increased your power with God. Faith, with you, is not the product of emergency. It is not called up by special exertions, sometimes strong, and sometimes so feeble that you tremble with fear that it is lost altogether,—sometimes distinctly beholding Christ your Savior, and sometimes unable to penetrate the veil, which obscures him,—sometimes grasping the promises, and sometimes unable to trust them. This was, once, the style of your faith; and even then, you could sometimes take hold of God, and command a power which made Satan tremble on his throne. Frequently, perhaps, you called down, upon saints and sinners, a measure of divine influence, which filled them with comfort and praise, with awe and terror.

Now, faith is your life, your breath, your easiest, strongest, most habitual mental exercise. Not that you are unchangeable, like God. Poor enfeebled human nature must have its variations. But they must not paralyze the faith of the perfect Christian—must not break its hold upon the crucified, nor produce distrust of what Jehovah says. There may be "heaviness through manifold temptation," but no letting go the hold upon the tempter's conqueror. There may be clouds and darkness around the cross, but the trust in him who bled, is firm and unflinching. Faith, clear,

strong, steady, and commanding, is the very life of perfect love. And the effect of this upon your power in prayer, is marked and decisive. With this unyielding faith, you pray for the brethren. And are they to feel no special grace in answer? You plead with God to rouse the slumbering, convict the impure, and create the immortal thirst for full redemption, which will not, cannot rest, until it is realized; and may you expect to see no movings of the mighty deep? Will no pungent sorrow for inbred sin, no weeping confessions of unfaithfulness, no groanings for liberty, follow these fervent constant pleadings of such prevailing faith? Impossible! God will not deny himself. There will be trouble somewhere, conviction for impurity somewhere, a struggle for clean hearts somewhere, just as sure as the "faith that works by love and purifies the heart" is in lively exercise. There may be stout resistance,—brethren may speculate, criticize, and even unjustly censure,—may doubt, fear the effects, postpone the consecration, or treat the cause of holiness with entire neglect; but, in answer to the pleadings of that faith which supports perfect love, the Holy Spirit will disturb their repose, and there surely will be somewhere a crying out for full salvation. We, therefore, put it down as a fact inevitable, that, if holiness is enjoyed and lived, it will be diffused.

And the same, we are certain, must be true in regard to sinners. They cannot, all and forever, remain quiet, when this power with God calls for his awakening Spirit. The entreaties of Christ's own loved ones,—of those who are honored with rest upon his very bosom, the very throbbings of whose hearts he feels, and who "plead

with him as one would plead with a friend," must prevail. Heaven will be moved by the power of faithful prayer, and some gracious results will be seen abroad,—the same perhaps in kind which are frequently seen in the church when only ordinary grace is felt and brought to bear. The same in kind, but vastly more. It is not possible that perfect purity exists where none is felt,—where none is operative. We might appeal to facts. We have them, within our own limited observation, sufficient to fill a volume. But we have not room to introduce them here. We will throw ourselves upon the unalterable assurance of the adorable Savior: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." Would to God that these words of power were realized by the church.

And there are other means than prayer, to be increased in efficiency by the blessing of holiness. The spirit of the sanctified cannot be inoperative. It is felt and acknowledged, wherever it exists. Without a word, it reproves sin so directly, so forcibly, that the sinner trembles under its stern rebukes. It leads the wanderer back to God. It persuades with silent, but pathetic love, the regenerate to seek for holiness. It draws, like the heart of Jesus, by its powerful attraction, the souls of believers upwards, and of guilty sinners away from the devil. Religion, "pure and undefiled," so enters the person, the bearing, the words, the business transactions, the daily life of the wholly consecrated, that all men see it, and hear it, and feel it when they mingle with them. And then, this heart of perfect love, is moved to every good word and work. This spirit is seen in pity and

relief for the poor, and the distressed, by the side of the sick and dying. It shrinks from no crosses, no sacrifices, no sufferings, in the cause of the Master. All this must have its effect,—must add to the fruit that is borne by the ordinary Christian, so that all the world may see it. As the mountain stream that glides through the vale, reveals its humble track by the freshness of the verdure by its side, this fertilizing spirit exhibits its power by the thrift and vigor of the graces wherever it moves.

And there is immense additional force in the living testimony, in the word of exhortation and warning that comes up from these purified hearts, and drops from these consecrated lips. If they come from the sacred desk, they burn, and glow, and dissolve, wherever they fall. If they come from the most obscure and illiterate, they go home, with a power that no man can evade.

Yes, we must vindicate our profession, by the moral effects of holiness—actual, visible, practical. And if we are bearing no "more fruit" than before we were purged, it is time to beware. In this condition, searching self-examination, weeping sorrow, and appropriating faith are more becoming than high profession.

Thus, does the central idea of Christianity make its appeal to professors of perfect love. Not an utterance in all this earnest plea which is not dictated and required by the fact that holiness is the centre of the Christian scheme.

SEC. II. AN APPEAL TO THE GENERAL CHURCH, AND ESPECIALLY TO THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED BUT IN PART.

The deep solemnity of the truths we have reached in this discussion, and especially in the chapter on the central idea neglected, must profoundly impress us. The want we have ascertained is highly suggestive.

1. It calls the church to profound reflection. Facts so immensely important in their bearings cannot be passed slightly over. Whoever neglects to consider them carefully and thoroughly, must incur a fearful responsibility. Throughout the length and breadth of Zion, let us anxiously inquire how much we have lost by dependence upon false remedies for the evils which have threatened us. What intense folly to have speculated so much and so wildly upon the means of church renovation and power! What madness to have "forsaken God, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water!" What a grievous waste of time and strength, in wandering so far for help, when it is just at hand! God calls upon the church to examine cautiously the reasons why this want exists, why it has continued so long. Shall we find the defect in him? We dare not entertain the thought. His infinite perfections, his ample provisions, and his gracious promises forbid it. Alas! in ourselves alone we shall find the cause. Let the search commence more sincerely, more thoroughly, more generally, than ever before. The great sin of the church is surely neglect of reflection. Here and there may be found individuals who are looking intensely into their own hearts, into the providences of God, into his holy word, into the history

of the church, into the spirit of the age, and into the destiny of the race. But this is not the general occupation of nominal Christians. Oh that we could reach the careless multitude, sweeping on to eternity with no just estimate of this wondrous being, and its fearful responsibilities! Stop, brethren; stop and think. How dreadful is the darkness gathering around you! How trembling and faint that life which should be vigorous with the energy of God! How deep that depravity which defiles Jehovah's temple! How feeble that power which should be clothed with omnipotence! And how unnecessary, how criminal is all this, when our Heavenly Father is "more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than parents are to give good gifts to their children!" Alas! our thoughtlessness, our indifference, will ruin us. Depend upon it, the church will never be better, will never clear up her vision, will never revive, will never present herself without spot, will never put on strength, will never accomplish her mission, till the habit of profound reflection upon the character of her wants, her privileges, and her responsibilities, can be induced in her members. And to this our want calls us this day, with an eloquence of entreaty, and an authority of command, which it would seem impossible to resist.

2. It calls the church to deep humiliation. Can we, brethren, look at our sad deficiencies, and retain our pride, our arrogance? Is it a small evil, that we have grieved God's Holy Spirit; that we have declined the light, the life, the holiness and power, which he has urged upon us, and spread "blasting and mildew" through such large portions of the heritage of God?

Human inventions, carnal gratifications deliberately chosen, and divine agency superseded! The world perishing, and the Heaven-commissioned church no adequate power to reach it! Sin, and misery, and ruin, increasing in fearful ratio all around us, and we unable to roll back the burning tide! In God's name, let us bow ourselves into the dust. Let every faithful watchman lift up his voice. Let the alarm be sounded from land to land, from island to island, from continent to continent, until the notes of solemn warning shall fall upon the ear of every Christian in this world of sin! Pride, accursed pride! away with it! trample it into the earth; and down into the dust, O ye millions of Zion! God hath a terrible controversy with you; and if ye will not hear, if ye will not humble yourselves, he will certainly cast you off, and save the world by other hands.

3. Finally, it calls the church to fervent prayer. The church, the whole church; for what will it avail if only here and there a weeping few shall pour out their complaints before God? They may save themselves. They may save some far off and near. They may secure refreshing seasons, limited in extent and power. They may even save the general church from dissolution and divine renunciation. All this they may undoubtedly do. But this is not what the present age demands. The church and the world require a revival so deep and all-pervading as to shake the nations; so pure and glorious as to wrap the earth in a flame of light; so benign and penetrating as to enter all hearts, and move and mould all classes of society, all departments of education, all human governments; so divine as to challenge infidelity, grapple hand to hand with the dreaded power of

sin, and roll back, with the force of Omnipotence, the advancing tide of human corruption.

And how shall this be done, but by the power of the Holy Ghost? The baptism from heaven will put this honor upon the church. It is the fire of God to consume iniquity. It is the might of Jehovah to conquer the world. And how long shall we repose in our weakness? How long shall we live without this transcendent divine energy? This very day God says to us, "Ask, and it shall be given you." Then let us ask. Let the myriads of the church commence the struggle of mighty prayer. To faith—firm, clear-sighted, vigorous, combining faith God will give this baptism of fire.

And we see it coming. Already have we heard a voice from heaven to the church, saying, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." Let then the prayer begin, and be caught up by every tongue; let it extend from church to church, from land to land, until the fervent, persevering, universal cry shall be—

> "Oh that it now from heaven might fall,
> And all our sins consume!
> Come, Holy Ghost, for thee we call;
> Spirit of burning, come!"

But, a few earnest words to the brethren personally. May we not, for a few moments, lay aside every thing but the honest consideration of the state we are in,

morally, before God, the call to a holy life, and the imperative duty of immediate attention to this call? The searching eye of God is upon us. Probation is rapidly expiring, the judgment is at hand. Suffer us in humility to inquire, is the tendency to sin still in your nature? Do you feel it rising in opposition to holiness? Does it interfere with your faith, your hope, your love, your happiness? Have you been compelled to war with your own souls, when every ransomed power should have been on the Lord's side? Is it a fact, that after all, you have been only partly devoted to God—that you have vacillated between Christ and the world, heaven and hell—that you have been among the number, whose selfish, worldly lives have made bitter work for repentance, and brought doubt upon the very truth of that religion you have professed? Alas! how much cause for mourning do you now see in these unwelcome truths!

And what are your present views of that mode of life which has brought upon you so much weakness, suspicion, and peril? Do you look upon it all, even now, with indifference? Are you half inclined to resent the fidelity which has uncovered the source of these evils within you? Would you prefer to settle down again into quietude, with the hope that God will somehow, at some future distant time, deliver you from your inward depravity? Be not grieved with us for our plainness and fidelity. In the love we bear to you and to the bleeding church of the Redeemer, let us say, you are almost, if not entirely, backslidden. Already contented with corruption in your heart! willing that inward foes to your soul, foes to your blessed Master

should remain undisturbed!—ready, even with your own hand, to draw around your spirit the veil that has been lifted, to show you the deadly evils that remain there!—better pleased with the cry of peace, peace, when God has not spoken it, "than with the solemn announcement that without holiness you cannot see the Lord;"—wishing, and half expressing the wish, that the church might not be disturbed upon the subject of holiness; that she might be suffered to enjoy, without alarm, her carnal alliance with the world, in its fashionable pleasures and unholy tempers! Alas! these are not "the fruits of the Spirit." Even the justified state, preserved in its life and power, abhors sin, and none so much as that which rises up from within the soul. Regeneration in its lowest state, loves holiness, and pants to be filled with it. But is it even yet too late for your souls to rally? May not the very fact that these truths are unwelcome to you, bring you to reflection, and send you again to that blood which is able to cleanse you from all sin? How, we beseech you, came your spirits thus indifferent to the work of entire purification? It was surely not always thus. No, we are certain there was a time when the very appeals at which you now affect to smile, would have melted you to tears. How have you reached this state in the church, mingling with her people, kneeling at her altars, listening to her instructions, enjoying her confidence, and perhaps her honors? There can be no mistaking the answer. By your own confession, you have neglected the command, "Go on to perfection." O, believe it, your only remedy is in the very thing you have begun to despise. O, rebuke, in agony of grief, on your knees, rebuke this anti-

Christian spirit! For Christ's sake plead for pardon, ere a sense of religion has wholly perished out of you. And when your evidence of the divine favor is again restored, then cry day and night, till the prayer is answered, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Heaven grant you, right early, an answer to your prayer. But if any of you conclude still to despise and oppose the doctrine of entire sanctification as a distinct work, and discourage those who, by prayers and tears, by essays and sermons, by precept and example, are struggling night and day to revive it in the church, let us entreat you to strive to do it, as far as possible, in the language, or at least in the style of the Scriptures. Show us your warrant from Heaven if you wish us to desist.

But these are not the prevalent feelings of those who are now sanctified in part. What relief to our hearts, dear brethren, that so many of you believe, in reality, that the work of holiness may be completed in this life; that though you have not yet felt its saving and renovating power upon your hearts, you admit its necessity, and would gladly welcome any message, or influence, from earth or heaven, calculated to stimulate your faith, and lead your soul into the ocean of perfect love.

We find you, it is true, surrounded by great and numerous difficulties. Darkness may brood over your spirits, and the way to entire salvation be covered with clouds and beset with obstructions. We know full well the misery of that dread suspense, of that vacillation between hope and fear; the torture of those sad defeats which so frequently result from well-meant but misdirected efforts to obtain the blessing. And the Savior

knows them also; and you are sustained to this hour by his gracious sympathy. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." What unspeakable consolation must it be to reflect, that he has been looking on, in all this struggle, not as a stern, relentless judge, but as a weeping, sympathizing friend! O, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Difficulties indeed there are, but, thank God, there are none but what may be overcome—none but what have been overcome a thousand times,—immensely greater ones than any we know, were triumphed over by Enoch, who found the way to "walk with God" amid the darkness of the patriarchal age; by Elijah, who secured the blessing, and preserved his integrity, amid the bitter taunts and cruel persecutions of Baal's blasphemous prophets; by Paul, whose complete death to the world and life to Christ were reached through tribulations, which compelled prominent Christians to "take joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and look with calm delight upon all the horrors of martyrdom! No such obstacles as these obstruct our path. There is, it is true, much inattention to the great subject. But this can be removed by efforts made in the strength of grace. At once we can commence the investigation, by reading, meditation, conversation, and prayer; and we can so thoroughly and constantly persevere, as to make the mental exercise required habitual. Our prayers have not heretofore included, distinctly and importunately, as they should have done, the blessing of perfect love, for ourselves and others, but, by the aid of the Savior, we can begin the work of prayer upon this sub-

ject anew. We can learn to use the prayers for holiness furnished us by revelation, and powerfully suggested by a sense of our wants. Faith is weak, but the Lord, in answer to prayer, will increase it, until it shall wax exceeding bold and take the blessing as by storm. Our efforts at reform have been superficial, and to a great extent misdirected, but surely they may henceforth be directed towards the renovation of the heart. Thus, by simple means, means entirely within our own reach, the struggle for holiness may become general in the church. Sermons, and prayers, and conversation will acknowledge its claims, encourage to seek it, and faith will speedily bring thousands into this glorious light and perfect liberty of the sons of God! O happy day! Is it near at hand? Would to heaven it might be so. Shall it be so? Every soul must answer for itself. What can you gain by delay? What have you ever gained by neglecting the work of entire consecration? How many hard struggles, how many defeats, how many hours of bitter regret have you brought upon yourselves by declining to appropriate entirely "the blood that cleanseth from all sin?" Alas! how grievous the error, to have followed the world more than that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord!" The glory of God calls upon the church to arise and put on her beautiful garments. The perils of contentment in a state of imperfect sanctification, sound their terrific alarm in the ears of Zion. The bliss and safety of holiness invite her members to come up at once to their exalted privilege. The wants of the world perishing around us reiterate the call. The scenes of death and the judgment day urge us, with overwhelming power,

to the foot of the cross! What is our answer? To our brethren of all creeds, "who love our Lord Jesus Christ," we would say, in the name of God, help us if you can; but if you cannot, bear with us. Surely in our vigorous, constant, attacks upon all inward and outward sin we mean no harm; we do no harm to you, no harm to the world. We claim it as the most exalted mission of an immortal mind, to summon the church of the living God to the deep experience, and the practical demonstration of Christian holiness. To utter this summons intelligibly, sincerely, affectionately, constantly, is a work worthy of a seraph from glory. May Heaven grant this honor, yet to thousands who are now trembling with alarm, at every call to an immediate experience, profession, and practice of the faith of the venerated dead.

We protest it is no new doctrine we are preaching, it is no new struggle in which we are engaged, it is no new victory we claim, it is no new profession we make. God is our witness for how many ages this very faith has been the faith of the living church, how long and fierce has been its war with the coldness, the unbelief, the worldly-mindedness, the corruptions of men; and yet how many and how glorious have been its triumphs. To these very triumphs every bright spirit in heaven is indebted for his crown, and upon the success of this very faith the salvation of the word depends. This is the vindication of our zeal.

SEC. III. APPEAL TO THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH.

In every church some are the guides of others. By character or office they have prominence and influence. Upon such Christians rest high responsibilities. No merely natural qualities can fit them for their position. It is not amiableness of heart, sternness of intellect or elegance of bearing that they are called upon to teach. Of simple goodness—the highest style of goodness, they are to be models.

The leader of a class is constantly before his members, and the church, and the world, in the spirit and character which he actually possesses, and these are decisive of the influence he exerts. Profession is not certainly based upon reality. It cannot be relied upon to determine the reputation of the leader nor the tendency of his efforts. To make earnest and continued claims to a devout temper of mind, a strong sympathy with the wants and sufferings of others, and a lively desire for their religious prosperity, can in no sense answer, instead of inward and outward holiness. If there be cherished depravity—unpardoned sin, it will surely develop itself. Devout minds will see and be grieved at it. The church, and especially the class, will feel the chill of it. It is vain to vociferate and affirm. Even tears cannot supply the deficiency.

In the same proportion are the effects of remaining depravity. It is a relief to come before a class with a clear sense of acceptance with God,—with a heart melted to tenderness, under a sense of forgiving mercy and Christian love. A relief!—A blessing indeed, for

which no language can make adequate expression. Happy would it be, if the church could be honored and blessed with such leaders only. There would be in such communion with God—in such representation of his divine prerogatives and power, a conservative, quickening influence, under which pure spiritual religion would everywhere revive and prosper. But alas! it cannot be claimed. Humiliating as is the fact, it must be acknowledged that multitudes of leaders go to their classes late or irregularly, because they attach paramount importance to secular avocations,—reluctantly, because they have no clear and quickening sense of divine forgiveness;—that they begin and perhaps continue their exercises in a cold, indifferent, mechanical style, because the power of divine love is not upon their hearts. To tell the evils that result from such unfortunate—we ought to say criminal misrepresentations of the spirit of our Master, is utterly impossible. There is the chill of faith,—the paralysis of spiritual life,—the fearful contagion of example,—the backsliding of members,—the thin attendance,—the weakness of the church, and the general suspicion of insincerity pervading the community. Eternity alone can reveal the harm to souls. It is surely worth while to inquire searchingly into the cause of such fatal tendencies, and if we are not mistaken they will develop themselves in a sound discussion of holiness as an element of success in the class leader.

1. We must consider the fact that every form of character exerts its own silent influence upon the minds of others. If the soul of the leader has been entirely consecrated to God—cleansed from sin, and filled with perfect love, in its numberless involuntary revealings,

you shall see none of those earthly longings, those ruling creature attachments, those potent secular influences, which mingle so much of dross, "with the pure gold of the sanctuary." You will feel none of that worldly, selfish spirit, which degrades religion into so striking a resemblance to irreligion, which so nearly annihilates the distinction between the kingdom of light, and the kingdom of darkness. You cannot see nor feel them, because they are not there. By the blood of Jesus Christ—by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, they have been cleansed away. When you come into the presence of your leader, in the spirit that pervades his soul; that illuminates his countenance, that quivers upon his lip, sparkles in his eye, and trembles in his voice, you realize religion. There, in one instance at least, is a living demonstration, apart from all he says, of the existence and power of a spiritual Christianity. By its quiet, imperceptible agency, it inspires you with a dread of the world—an abhorrence of sin—a loathing of self. By its intrinsic charms, it attracts you to the Savior, and fills you with unearthly longings after "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace." Deep solemnity rests upon the meeting. There is more of heaven than of earth in the class-room. The heart tenders and the eye weeps under a sense of the melting presence of God. The devout aspirations of the soul are kindled afresh, and whatever may have been the condition of the member when he came in, he goes out saying "My heart and my flesh crieth out for God—for the living God."

The personal effect of holiness in a leader is of the highest importance. It ought to be so in theory.

It is so, in fact; as all men of experience in this department of Christian labor can fully attest. How easy to get full attendance in the class of such a leader. How often does the class become too large to remain together, and how difficult the task of division; with such fond and devoted attachments, do members cleave to a man whose worth is of God, and whose power is in his goodness! He may be a plain man—an illiterate man—a man in humble life; but he bears about him the charms of holy love, and there is a cord in the penitent heart striving for spiritual excellence, which responds to the influence of love.

And this faithful reflection of the Savior's image is not confined to the spiritual vision of the little class. It shines out with so pure and steady a light, that all the church and world can see it. Not by the intended exertions of the humble man, for that effect,—nor even to his own apprehensions, as a peculiarity in his case, elevating him above his fellow Christians, and giving him a conscious right to say to any of them, "Stand aside, I am holier than thou,"—but by the simple fact that he is all the Lord's. God's grace has subdued and sanctified him. The divine image beams from his countenance. The Holy Spirit is soul to his body of Christian profession and outward forms. It is God—God alone whose light is seen—whose power is felt in the feeble worm of earth; and none more decidedly and perseveringly than he, denies all honor to self, all glorying to the mere mortal. The very spirit and fact of his consecration are in the renunciation of self, and the installation of his divine Master as the object of his adoration, and the ground of his glorying. You cannot grieve him more

than to elevate his poor unworthy self to the place he has assigned to his Savior, and he is thus at once an example of perfect humility, and a guide to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." It is in this divine union that the church beholds him, and that he becomes a spiritual leader to the hosts of God. What would the church do without such guiding minds? Who would conserve the great cross-bearing, self-denying, humiliating, and saving doctrines of the gospel? Who would represent, exert, and diffuse her spirit and power? Who would give life and energy to her prayer meetings, and her benevolent operations? Who would sustain her reputation before the world when she is charged with insincerity,—with supporting an impracticable system, and commending to the people a standard of goodness, which never has been, and never can be, realized? Alas! we are deficient enough at all these points. But holiness alone vindicates us so far as we are capable of vindication. We repeat—a wider than a class influence is exerted by holiness in a class leader. The honor of his position is conceded to him. He is felt to be the man to be among the advance-guard of the army of God. His hands are clean—his heart is pure. He is able to command the confidence of his brethren, without a word to ask it, or an act to implore it.

And what power has such a man over the moral feelings, decisions and destinies of men? Apart from all he may say or do, he is a standing demonstration of redemption by Christ and of the truth of the gospel. Sinners of all grades believe in him, and infidels are confounded by him. While he lives and his presence is felt, no man dares to say the blood of Jesus Christ cannot cleanse from all sin.

2. There is much teaching to do in the church of God—much besides what can be done by the regular pastors. The fathers must teach—ruling elders and deacons must teach—class leaders must teach the young, the inexperienced, all classes. For our convictions, and even the early endowments of conversion, are but the first lessons in the great art of a religious life. Great indeed, they are in themselves, great in their revelations to the soul—great in their implications and legitimate results—but still only "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ;" and there must be teachers to open up to the minds of disciples the mysteries of the kingdom. But are we not obliged to say to many who have been long in the way, and occupied responsible stations in the church—"When, for the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

Listen for once candidly to the statements of members in a class meeting. Observe what defeats they acknowledge in conflict with the devil,—how little is known and appreciated of the power of God available to man in his trial state,—how imperfectly understood are the privileges and resources of Christians,—how completely the enemy might have been foiled by the armor of Christ, when he has been victorious,—what heights and depths of divine love have been just before them, which, however, they never have reached, never have thought of,—what growth in grace and evangelical power and usefulness has been easily at command,—what innumerable and pitiable stumblings over trifling obstacles, which, had they been mountains, might have been swept away

by the energy of faith. Observe all this, and then the coming up again of sincere good desires,—the trembling utterance of noble resolutions,—the manifest aspirations for strength, and progress, and discoveries, which they know not how to reach. Then think of the eternal verity of those rich and available promises held out in the glorious gospel, to every one of these dear disciples,—covering every one of their lamentable failures; solving, with the clearness of light, every practical doubt which bewilders them, and applying with wonderful, even miraculous certainty, to the very exigencies of their numerous and fearful struggles.

And then listen to a "leader" attempting their instruction, whose experience carries him not a step beyond them, who has either never learned, or forgotten how to conquer,—who looks not into the crowded armory whence their weapons may be drawn,—feels not the power which he ought to offer to them,—knows not the road through which he ought to lead them over their difficulties, and on into the land of Beulah! What sad generalizing follows! What pitiable inadequacy in the instructions! What unskilful treatment of critical cases! What lamentable sameness and endless repetition of remark adapted, by the merest accident, if at all, to the cases of individuals! See how he leads them up to a particular point, and there stops, not knowing how or daring to take them over the place at which he himself has been accustomed to pause for years together; sending away his class with no new suggestions suited to special cases for the week to come, no advanced position gained—no fresh discoveries in the glorious world of realities before them; only to come back when the

next class day arrives, to rehearse the same defeats and pause over the same difficulties to them insuperable!

Alas! what melancholy, what undeniable facts are all these! What wonder that the class room becomes a mere place of form or of dread and terror to these members,—that its numbers so alarmingly diminish, and that so much ado with so little success, is required to maintain even the form and authority of so evangelical and time-honored an institution.

Take now a leader of deep experience, who has dared to confide in the divine assurance that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin"—who has counted the cost and renounced the world, parting forever with its carnal indulgencies and sinful pleasures,—who has consecrated himself without reservation, to God and his cause forever, and thrown himself with a power of faith that knows no denial, upon the blood that cleanseth, and by constant trust in Christ alone, has preserved alive the flame of perfect love; and mark the difference in his leading. With devout breathings after God, he listens to every word when a member speaks, observes the difference between what is said in mere form, by habit or from memory, and the true out-gushings of the soul—how far the member has proceeded—where stopped—what is the grand defect in his mental habits —the special difficulty in his way, the reason why he does not go beyond his present position and grow up into Christ. His reply is no senseless common place, but a palpable hit. This is your difficulty and this is your remedy. I have been where you are and in this way I gained my victory, the very victory you require. What a flood of light is poured upon the darkened

heart in a few words fitly chosen! How clear is the manifestation to the soul of a higher life—an attainable perfection in holy love! How difficulties vanish and the scheme of Salvation simplifies under the influence of deep experience, and he who came to class in doubt upon a particular point, goes away with a salutary and appropriate lesson. He who came disheartened goes away with his soul encouraged, and seeing what is for him, and how easily it may be obtained, he resolves to obtain it, and if his struggles do not immediately result in the highest realization of holiness, their effects are seen in the quickened conscience, the ardent breathing after a higher spiritual life, and the evident power with which he resists evil, and labors for God.

Under such a leader the whole class moves as by a common impulse onward in the divine life. The class room is no place of dreaded confinement for a tedious hour, but the loved scene of fresh consecrations and renewed baptisms of the Holy Ghost. The marked effect of holiness in the leader, is seen in the increased numbers and regularity of attendance, as well as in the growth in grace, and the vigorous Christian life of the members. This is not mere *a priori* probability. It is history—fully authenticated matter of fact, which we have all witnessed so frequently, that the mere statement must carry conviction to every reader. We know that whatever may be the importance of intelligence and character, and experience in a class leader, the grand difference after all is in holiness. Some who are really illiterate, are vastly better leaders than splendidly educated men, merely because they drink deeply from the fountain of life.

3. The members of a class are not only to be impressed and instructed; they are to be aroused, and in many instances, reclaimed from a guilty apostasy. By a long and careful observation, we are convinced that not more than about one-third of the members attend class from attachment to the institution,—because their hearts are warm in the love of God, which they long to tell to their companions in the way to heaven. And, excusing those who are providentially detained, one-half of the remainder perhaps attend with tolerable regularity, from a conviction of duty, or possibly, from fear of discipline, or, it may be, an unwillingness to grieve or offend the leader or preacher. But the other half, alas! are seldom or never present. They are busily engaged in the cares of the world; gaining a mere subsistence by constant and perplexing toil; accumulating wealth by industry or skill in trade; cultivating a growing and perilous attachment to the things that perish with the using, and absorbing their leisure in idle gossip or common sociality, as circumstances may suggest. What is to be done for these? Has the class-leader no mission to those who never meet him in class?

It would surely seem so; at least if we judge from the established habits of the greater number. The class-days come and go, with no special change. The three, five, or twelve, are there; the feeling of sadness or mortification is endured; prayer and religious communion with the few, relieve the spirits, and inspire a little hope for the future, and the class is dismissed from care, and perhaps even from thought, till the day returns, or the leader's meeting demands the usual financial account. Not that there are never serious convictions of sad

delinquency—never purposes of amendment. Frequently, no doubt, the leader says, in himself, I am really criminally negligent; there are A, B, and C, who have not been to class for months, I fear they are backsliding—I must go and see them; before another class-day, I will surely do it. The moment comes when the call should be made. The time might be easily spared, but that inward shrinking—that unconquerable reluctance to bear a cross for Christ's sake, returns. It triumphs again. The duty is delayed, and thus the days, the weeks, and even years pass away, and the same monotonous call of the list goes on—the same ominous *a* is entered upon the book. The conference year closes with numerous expulsions, or the handing over to a successor of the "body of death" which has been thus accumulating through years of similar negligence.

What is the explanation of all this? Is there actually no remedy? Might not these dying ones be sought out and revived? Yes, surely. The Savior has shown us what is to be done. The faithful shepherd would "leave the ninety-and-nine" and betake himself to the wilderness, and the mountains, and give himself no rest, until "the lost was found." If the leader had the state of mind which his work requires, he would let no idle time go by; he would force every minor consideration to bow, until he had found the wandering, erring one, and exhausted every means in his power, to bring him back to the Redeemer's fold.

Whence this inward aversion to the outward mission of his office? Whence this controlling desire to be excused from duty—known, and felt, for months, and years? Alas, there is no disguising it. The remains

of carnal nature give the only true—the sufficient explanation. It is this inward depravity which delays, apologizes, remonstrates, utterly refuses when God calls. The cross may never, in any state of grace, wholly disappear; but it may be borne with a heart of loving gratitude, for the sake of him to whom the heart, and life, and all, are freely and fully consecrated.

Let this leader but yield to the convictions which he has felt, times without number, struggling within him, that he ought to be holy—that he is without excuse for his delay in realizing the fulness of love, which the Savior died to purchase for him; let him part with the world in its lusts and attractions, and lay it upon God's altar freely and forever, and with it himself and friends, and call them no longer his, but God's to all eternity; let him bathe his soul in the ocean of the Redeemer's blood, and claim, by present prevailing faith, the full salvation which the gospel of Christ offers to every child of God, and rise up in the possession of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord," and will he then shrink from the cross? With his heart melted, baptized, overflowing with "perfect love which casteth out fear," will he allow the souls to perish unwarned, which are committed to his care? No, he will not. It is impossible. He sees, in a new light, the worth of the soul. Its powers of endless enjoyment or suffering rise up before him with a magnitude and scope of interest he had never before thought of. New views of the preciousness of a sinner's ransom, of the priceless value of redeeming blood, and the inestimable importance of the divine glory, now fill and command his soul, and he longs to labor, and sacrifice and bear crosses for his

Master. He has no inward aversion to duty. His will no longer rises up in rebellion against the will of God. His own will has sunk to deepest, profoundest humility, —is lost and swallowed up in the will of his heavenly Father. What melting, absorbing gratitude is inspired in his purified heart, by the intimation that there is an opportunity anywhere, to do a little for God—that he who reigns the Sovereign of the universe, will deign to use his humble services anywhere, in any labor, for the promotion of his glory. It is enough. Crosses and sufferings, persecutions and trials, are all rich in the blessing of exalted privilege, when endured for him whom his whole soul loveth. No lingering now—no conferring with flesh and blood—no seeking excuses to postpone the mission of love which is so plainly his duty in pursuit of a soul wandering upon the dark mountains, and in danger every moment of dropping into hell. He goes—goes before he has had time to estimate difficulties, and give place to the devil. And when he finds his absent brother, he is with him, not in a spirit of censoriousness and acrimony—not there to abuse and persecute him, to rouse his resentment by official denunciation and menace. Far from it. He is there breathing the benign and heavenly spirit of his Master. There to convince, to subdue and win the erring brother—there to bring the heart of living Christian sympathy into contact with that cold and formal piety or worldly death, and warm it into life again—there to show and cause his friend to feel the amazing power of holy love. And does he succeed? Generally he does. In a large majority of instances he breaks down the spirit that was becoming hard and

stubborn, and brings back to the fold the straying one. And what a thrill of joy his presence gives, when he is seen again in the class-room, by the little group he had long left to mourn over his loss. With united penitence and faith, with mortification and joy does he once more blend his prayers, confessions, and tears with those he once so dearly loved. He comes again and again, and finds at length, the well of water within him, springing up, into everlasting life. Others have been reached in the same way. They have heard the glad news, and been affected by it. God has laid to his helping hand, and soon it is rumored about that Brother A.'s class-room is filled. There is a revival in his class. The preacher goes in and catches, or, what is better, increases the flame. The work spreads from heart to heart, from class to class, until the whole church is on fire.

Surely this is no fancy sketch—no mere *a priori* reasoning. True it is *a priori* demonstration itself. It is as irresistible as the presence and power of a cause, in its legitimate effect. But it is not merely this, for who has not seen it again and again? Who has not marked the amazing power of grace, and especially of full salvation, to make a successful leader of a man of even small natural resources; and to send a man, who, in a state of only ordinary piety, had been idly lingering at home, while his members are backsliding, away from his class, out in pursuit of them, until he comes back rejoicing over the prodigal's return?

4. There is surely immense moral power in the influence of leading laymen. Under the authorized ministry lay-deacons and elders, trustees, stewards, Sabbath-school superintendents and teachers, colporteurs,

exhorters and lay-ministers, as well as class leaders, stand out before the church as conductors of the sacramental host. If they are cold, selfish and earthly, how chilling and fatal is their influence upon the private membership! Indeed the presumption is, that they have attained this distinction not by superior abilities, or personal influence alone, but by eminence in piety. By this very fact they should have been pointed out as models for the great body of the church to follow. What wonder if unsanctified tempers and words and actions in them should be deemed an excuse for the same things in others! What marvel if a church whose secular as well as spiritual agents are worldly, haughty and severe in manner—subject the business and direction of God's church to the spirit of the world, rather than their temporal business to the spirit of Christianity, should become a worldly church, lose its power to conquer sin, and cease to be respected as a reforming and purifying agent in society!

Is it not time for these brethren to begin the work of self-examination? Deem it not strange if, when this work of honest inward investigation is completed, some of you—even you who ought to be masters in Israel, are not merely without the evidence of perfect love, but without the witness of adoption. Alas, what responsibility is here? Ostensibly leading the church of God to a heaven of holiness, but actually, so far as the influence of character and example can go, leading it to hell. May Heaven be merciful. How long shall this fearful accusation be true? How long will you delay to return, with unaffected humility and penitence, like the Prodigal, to your Father's house, and thus, by humble confession

and hearty reformation, in some good degree, undo the wrongs you have done, and lead the followers of your fearful example back once more to the foot of the cross?

Happy if, upon thorough comparison with the gospel standard, you find yourselves able to say, Abba, Father. Happy—and it is so with many, if you have been able so far to master your worldly tendencies and triumph over your inward corruption as to preserve the approbation of God, to resist within the church, in her temporal and spiritual leadership, the secularizing tendencies of the times.

But why must you be contented with these small attainments? Why should you retain these inward allies of your outward foes, and thus obscure "the light that is in you," dim the lustre of your example, and paralyze your strength for the conservative and aggressive battles of the church? Why should you not, from your advanced official position, be the very men to rouse the desponding, to encourage the faint-hearted, to warn the backsliding, and to lead on the hosts of God to the triumphs of full salvation? But this can only be well and powerfully done by the force of example. If you, leaders in the army of God, will but yield to your honest convictions of the necessity of inward purification—honestly and firmly resolve in the strength of grace to be henceforth wholly for God, make the entire consecration, throw yourselves, with living, conquering faith, upon the merits of Christ for the blood that cleanseth, gain the evidence of perfect love, and freely, humbly take the responsibility of entire salvation and a holy life, what sweet subduing joy, what melting triumphant love, will fill your soul, and what gracious saving influences will

go out from your gushing tears, your rapturous smiles, your tender sympathy, your transparent teaching, your overwhelming appeals!

Thus come up the pleadings of this grand central idea of Christianity to the leaders of the church. What response shall be made to them?

SEC. IV. APPEALS TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Respected brethren, we trust you will pardon a few honest, affectionate words addressed to you by one who claims a place at your feet,—who is conscious of a profounder respect and a deeper love for you than it is in the power of language to express. While he trembles under the cross, he is compelled to bear it for the sake of his master.

1. Holiness must be preached—God has appointed a ministry for that very purpose, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." If, therefore, we who have been honored by this appointment, give no information that there is such a thing as "the perfecting of the saints,"—do not tell what is to be done "for the perfecting of the saints,"—hold out no encouragement, make no appeals, and perform no labor "for the perfecting of the saints," then, instead of bringing the people under our charge, "in the unity of the

faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," they will remain children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," and we shall be held responsible at the judgment.

Charitably as we regard the motives of all who stand upon the walls of Zion, we believe the solemn vows of that ministry which does not aim directly at the promotion of experimental and practical holiness are trifled with, in the fearful presence of him who will judge the quick and the dead. Philosophy is valuable so far as it removes the blindness from our spiritual vision, and reveals to our sight the true and the good. Polemics are in place when heresies obstruct the triumphant march of the King of kings. Rhetoric is available when it renders more transparent the medium through which the light of Heaven shines upon the world. Oratory is at home in the sacred deck, when it is the out-gushing of a soul filled with the Holy Ghost. But when any or all of these assume to supersede or embellish the message of God to dying men, they are a fraud upon the soul so grievous and cruel as to deserve the indignation of earth, and the wrath of Heaven. O, tell us, brethren beloved, what language within the power of man, deserves to supersede, or is able to embellish the Heaven-inspired summons, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," or the solemn, thrilling announcement—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Have we held up so distinctly as that all could see it, this glorious truth?

Have we called to our aid the power of the divine Spirit—the commands, the promises, the examples, the illustrations of the holy Scriptures, to make the duty, the privilege, and the way of holiness so plain, that no man who has listened to our ministry could mistake it? If this has been universally or even generally done, how are we to account for the apparent surprise, with which definite announcements of the doctrine, cogent arguments in its favor, and rousing appeals upon this subject, to the hearts of the people, are received in so many congregations of all denominations of Christians? Why say so many of our dear brethren, "we have not for many years heard it on this wise?" Why do those, who are inclined to be sceptical in relation to it, charge its faithful advocates with preaching a new and a strange doctrine in the church, though it is taught in the very style of the Scriptures—in the very language of the most eminent evangelical divines? Alas! the truth cannot be denied. The great privilege and duty of present salvation from all sin, is omitted in so large a number of sermons, as to leave many in doubt whether there be any such gospel, and grievously to discourage and mislead those whose spirits pant for full redemption. How many are permitted to live for years under the sound of a ministry in many respects evangelical, without even being told, in intelligible and encouraging language, that they may be saved from all sin in this life! And how many who have now and then heard of the glorious truth, have heard it only to mourn that it was not designed for them now!

The great object of the gospel is to make men holy. Sin has corrupted their hearts, paralyzed their

intellects, and perverted their wills. It has insinuated itself into their most secret thoughts and feelings, usurped the control of their passions, antagonized and broken down a thousand purposes of virtue, and exposed them to hell. This is all offensive to God. He stands directly opposed to sin, as such. It is not, therefore, any one form of it alone, that he seeks to destroy. To discriminate in his remedial work, would be to tolerate those forms of sin omitted in condemnation, and in offers of deliverance. This is impossible in him. It is against sin, as a principle, that he directs his efforts. True, he treats it in the concrete,—he points out and denounces special sins, and seeks in all conceivable modes to show its enormity, and dissuade men from indulging in it;—but in all particular instances, it is easy to see, that it is because it is sin that he levels against it sentence of condemnation. This reveals the general principle, and makes every special revelation against sin a general one. Hence, in the provisions of the gospel, he proposes to pardon, not a part, but all of our sins. He proposes "to cleanse us," not merely in part, but "from all unrighteousness." To accomplish this work, he appoints ambassadors—ministers of his grace,—and puts the Bible into their hands, as the great declaration of terms, upon which men may be saved from all sin. They are authorized to offer freely, pardon to the guilty, regeneration to the dead, adoption to the alien, sanctification to the impure. They are by no means at liberty to adopt any other standard. They may not refer to themselves as the rule, and offer only so much of salvation as they have themselves experienced. God never made poor man the measure of his proffered grace. If this

were to be practically claimed, then there would be as many gospels as there are ministers, and the extent of the hearer's offered privilege would be the acquirements of the pastor. No, we must preach the whole gospel; we must "declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or forbear," though, in our denunciations of all sin, we should severely condemn ourselves. We must preach holiness, though we feel that we are yet impure. He who does not, assumes the fearful responsibility of modifying the gospel,—of practically destroying the very soul of the gospel, and defeating its grand, ultimate aim. He assumes to make a gospel, as though it were for him to say what he will preach, as though he were the author of the message, or, having received it from the great Jehovah, he, a poor worm, will undertake to improve it, to select such parts of it as he prefers, and suppress the rest!—will inform the people of as much good news as he prefers, and keep back the rest!—will offer them a part of the glorious privileges of the gospel, and keep from them such as he does not realize in his own experience!—will offer them pardon and regeneration, but no perfected, finished holiness,—love, but never, distinctly, earnestly, and affectionately —"perfect love, that casteth out all fear." No, we make no gospel; we originate no message; we have no discretionary power as to what we will preach, what offers we will make, or withhold from the world. It is God's message,—every word of it his; and at the peril of souls, we may not add to it nor take from it one iota of what he has sent us to declare. We must tell guilty sinners, that if they "will seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near, he will

abundantly pardon,"—though morally dead, as generated men, they may be spiritually regenerated—"born again,"—made alive through the power of the Spirit;—though "aliens and foreigners," they may be "brought nigh by the blood of Christ,"—that "God will send forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, enabling them to cry Abba, Father;" and we must declare to the adopted, that "it is the will of God, even their sanctification;"—that it is their imperative duty to "love the Lord their God with all their hearts;"—that the "blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin." All this must be done, not by hints,—not timidly,—not so mixed and covered up as that men will not be likely to see these grand points in systematic and experimental theology, but so that they may have a definite view of them, and feel the power of their attractions and the full force of their respective and united claims; with such clearness, such pathos and energy, so often repeated and urged with tender expostulation and tears,—with such unction from God, such authority and power, as will move the great deep of the heart, fix every one of them distinctly in the mind, and draw out the whole being in earnest seeking for them.

This is all admitted theoretically; but is it practically, by ministers of the different evangelical churches? Do not thousands of them omit any such distinct and earnest reference to the privilege of entire sanctification, as would be likely to result in a well-directed struggle to obtain the blessing? Are not many alarmed when they see that by accidental glimpses of the doctrine, through their preaching, or otherwise, some of their people are beginning to groan for "full redemption in

the blood of the Lamb?" and, especially, if any burdened hearts, after "strong crying and tears," after many days of fearful struggle, profess to be perfectly freed,—if there is a realization of this glorious privilege, is not great concern expressed, are not these beloved ones discouraged, cautioned or neglected, until Satan has great chance to insinuate doubts, and destroy their confidence?

This is making a gospel! It is withholding God's truth! It is, we tremble to say it, accepting the office of ambassador from God's eternal spirit, and saying, at the same time, I will deliver only so much of this glorious message as I feel disposed, and suppress the rest! Not that our dear brethren think of it in this light, and formally determine upon so guilty a decision. Never! A man of conscience would sink to the earth under such a responsibility, if he were distinctly to feel it; and yet, from the most careful and charitable examination, extending through a series of years, and including large numbers, we are forced to the conviction that it is practically done! The slighest evidence to the contrary, from any source whatever, would give us the greatest possible satisfaction.

But this is all wrong. It must be so. We have no rights of this kind. We are invested with no such fearful prerogatives. We have never been to God and said, I will accept this commission, but I cannot declare the whole message. I will offer the world every thing you propose except holiness! I will insist upon all but "perfect love." I must admit of some remaining sin, in the heart. If any man comes into my pulpit and offers present deliverance from all unrighteousness to

my people, I must oppose him! If any of the dear people committed to my care, begin to cry out for the blood of Christ to cleanse them from all sin, I must immediately assure them that there is no such thing provided for them! No! we have never said this. We should turn pale with alarm, if we were to attempt it. And so far as we have done it in practice we are overwhelmed with sorrow.

2. But there are reasons why holiness is not more faithfully preached. It is hard to raise the stream higher than the fountain. It is hard to preach what we have never experienced, and fear of the reproach, "Physician heal thyself," we doubt not, hinders many of us from charging home upon the members of the church, their remaining corruptions,—their neglect of "the blood" that "cleanseth from all sin," and their exposures to apostasy, and final ruin in consequence! We have often felt keenly convicted of criminal negligence, upon this point. We have seen that experimental and practical holiness was the great desideratum of the church,—that our people were weak, and unstable in the great work imposed upon them by the order of God;—that the more devout among them looked up to us for relief from the doubts and distress into which their impurities had brought them; and we have been aware that the gospel contained the sovereign remedy for all these evils, and that God had commissioned us to bring out that remedy distinctly and powerfully. But alas! if brought out in its own clear light, it would appear to be that very remedy which our own souls have so long needed, and which we have neglected! It would excite much wonder amongst those upon whom

we urged it, that we had never applied it to our own pressing wants! Every command to the disciples of Christ uttered by us from the word of God, "Be ye holy," would condemn us; every promise urged for the encouragement of seekers for the blessing, would excite the inquiry, why does not the preacher lay hold of the promises? Every description of the charms of purity, —of the moral splendors of holiness, would elicit surprise that the pastor is not attracted by them! Alas! how many have been deterred from preaching a present, rich, and full salvation, by the terrors which these interrogatories have inspired! How many have delayed to exhibit what they have known to be the truth of God upon this subject, long—very long, after their minds have been roused by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and by the evident and beseeching wants of their people, for no other reason than for fear of the reproach, "Physician, heal thyself!" And how many, not able to satisfy conscience by an utter oblivion of the great doctrine of holiness, have, for this very reason, preferred some indirect mode of presenting it,—making it merely incidental to a discourse upon other kindred topics, and adopting some less pointed and convincing language than that of the Scriptures; a mode which, with the mass of hearers, will never succeed in giving prominence and effect to any doctrine.

But it is not in the nature of mind to rest quietly under such palpable inconsistency. It must, in some way, find its equilibrium. If it cannot—if it does not bring its practice up to its principles, it will strain every faculty to bring its principles down to its practice.

And there is more or less of confusion, necessarily, in

all judgments formed of a heart-doctrine which has never fully occupied the heart. There may be a zealous inquiry into it,—an ardent longing to know it,—a fervent pleading with God for its inestimable blessings, which, if persisted in, and rightly directed, will surely lead to a clear view of the doctrine. And even without these, there may be a firm speculative faith in the reality of Christian holiness, but no just idea of its import,—no correct appreciation of the pervading tenderness and love, humility, sweetness and power, which it imparts to the soul. It must, therefore, be confessed, that, until we are "sanctified wholly," our intelligence upon this great theme is something less than its reality, and extremely liable to be something different from it. Nothing is, therefore, easier to a mind in this state, than to originate doubts as to the just construction of those scriptures which teach it—to give plausibility to the suggestion, though it comes directly from the tempter, that it is something less than entire conformity to the will of God that the gospel requires and promises; and hence, that it is not so clearly a reason for condemnation, as we had at first supposed,—that we have not, for a long time, perhaps never, distinctly, forcibly, and feelingly urged upon the attention of our hearers, the duty of holiness. And how easy to follow out this train of reasoning! There are many other important doctrines of Scripture, besides the doctrine of Christian perfection, upon which it is our paramount duty to insist. And the great majority of gospel ministers,—good men beyond a doubt, give no prominence to this doctrine. They are probably judicious in this policy. It will be safer—more acceptable to the better

class of hearers, and decidedly more convenient for us, as we now feel, to follow their example. We shall avoid the enthusiasm of perfectionists. We shall escape the cutting reproach "Physician, heal thyself."

How easy, after this, to pass blindly over those passages of holy writ which teach clearly the doctrine of entire sanctification, as a present, imperative duty, and an exalted privilege,—to dwell with secret pleasure upon those which seem to imply the difficulty, and improbability, if not the impossibility, of living without sin; and if the result is not confirmed scepticism, in regard to the richest provision of the gospel, and the best hope of mortals, it is, almost inevitably, increased obscurity of vision, indifference to the wants of the church, and a quiet resignation to evils which we see no way to cure!

From this, to open opposition, the transition is almost imperceptible, but we trust few of those we address have made this transition.

We can, however, thus see how it is that we have so little preaching on the subject of holiness. The want of experience renders it unpleasant to do it, and hard to do it truthfully and effectually!

3. Experience will furnish the impulse and power to preach the doctrine of holiness. It may be preached because we find it in the Bible, or because it is a recognized doctrine of the church, but then it may be more a matter of form than of feeling,—more of duty than of choice. But when the rich enjoyment of perfect love pervades the soul, it is a well-spring of purity in utterance, as well as in life. Holiness becomes the most natural, truthful, and energetic outward expression of

the inner man. It is not, then, hard for the minister to bring himself up to the conclusion to offer perfect love to the children of God. He will not seek apologies for delaying to preach on the subject. The holy fire burns within, and it must flame out to the sight of the world. The blood that cleanseth from all sin is in the thoughts, and it is at once commended to the church. The sanctifying, witnessing Spirit, pervades the soul, and impels its action, and his divine energy is proffered to all who "hunger and thirst after righteousness."

Such is the constitution of mind that it can give force only to that which it feels to be true. Mere assent to a doctrine will impart no warmth,—no impressiveness to its announcement. It must, therefore, be far less effective where it is preached without the inward reality. Conviction of deep-felt sincerity in the preacher; of a warm and glowing love for the church; of an inward and powerful realization of the truth and paramount importance of the doctrine, will give great force to the preaching. We have all marked the difference, in effect, of these two modes of presenting truth. How often have we deeply regretted that the soundest principles of religion and the most fundamental practical teaching should suffer for the want of inward experience in the preacher, while the fresh and lively interest, the overwhelming pathos and power, imparted to the same instructions, by a deep and glowing experience, have fixed our attention, melted our hearts, and stamped indelibly upon our very souls, the truth of God. We must have the whole anointing to do this work. We can use nothing in the stead of it. We may argue in the use of the profoundest logic; we may adorn our discourses with all the

beauty and grace of rhetoric; we may utter the very words and combinations of orthodoxy; we may vociferate until our strength of lungs is exhausted, but if the truth do not well-up from within us—if it be echo merely, it will so appear. There is no concealing the fact. It represents itself. It speaks to the ears of men in its own intelligible language; and all feel, if they do not say, "There is something wanting. The words are all very well, but they seem to be hollow,—empty,—powerless!" The presence and agency of God's Spirit in the preaching will remedy this, and just in proportion as its influence has been admitted and made effective in the soul. The experience of which we speak is the work of the Holy Spirit. The soul is sanctified wholly by the Holy Spirit, and his divine presence,—his pervading energy in the heart alone can sustain the soul in its higher, holier life. The living experience, therefore, implies this very presence, and secures its holy power, in the exertions which the soul makes to diffuse its own purity and joy. Ministers of God who in this state proclaim a full salvation, not only can say, "We speak that which we do know, and testify that which we have seen;" but a power from the living God, dwelling within them, will accompany, attest, and send home the truth that is uttered.

4. Experience in holiness gives peculiar interest and effect to all preaching and to other pastoral labors. It is not in the work of entire sanctification alone, as a distinctive work, that this amazing power reveals itself. It pervades the whole man. It deepens, extends, and imparts peculiar strength to his love for sinners, and gives to all his efforts to save them a sincerity, and ear-

nestness, which it is hard to gainsay or resist. The converted man loves souls. The justified and regenerated minister goes out into the vineyard of God to save souls, but how often and painfully does he feel that there is so much of self mingled with his efforts,—so much of worldly motive, that he is compelled to weep in distress over his want of power! He feels the moral paralysis that resists the prompt, and bold, and decisive action which he knows the high obligations of his mission require. He remains in his study, or indulges in merely miscellaneous or desultory conversation, when he knows in his conscience he ought to be going from house to house, warning and praying for the people, and exerting every power of body and mind to save them from hell, merely because he has not the inward relish, the stern simplicity of aim, the singleness of eye, which he would gain in the full baptism of the Holy Ghost. Unsanctified human nature is reluctant to attack sin,—must be urged and argued with, and overruled by a sense of duty, to press on vigorously in the aggressive work of Christianity; and it is moreover dull in its vision of necessities, emergencies that exist and call for prompt and fearless action upon the part of the church, and especially the ministry. It hears no wailing of death coming up from the abodes of sin and wretchedness on earth, and from hell beneath. It sees no occasion of alarm for the world, or of haste to rescue its millions from perdition. He who is under its influence is a poor preacher, a poor pastor. His work of eternal moment hangs heavily on his hands. Diversion, recreation, entertainment of almost any kind, comes in as a real relief to his halting, doubting soul. O, what will become of such ministers

when God shall arise to make inquisition for blood,—when he shall search out the watchmen who were placed upon the walls of Zion to warn the people of danger, but who gave no warning, or spake so timidly, so seldom, so triflingly, that few believed them in earnest, and multitudes, in their very sight, rushed on unwarned to hell? There is blood in their garments—blood in their souls, which will cry for vengeance when the world is on fire.

But few, it is believed, of God's commissioned messengers permit themselves to be under its influence willingly. They resist it, and conquer it, and move on in despite of it, to rescue souls from death. They know, however, better than language can tell, how sore are their battles with remaining depravity,—how chilling are its effects upon the sympathies of their nature,—how paralyzing to the energies which they fain would use to break down the barriers of sin, and rescue its votaries from the perils of endless death,—how dark is the gloom which it throws around the burning truth of God, and not unfrequently around the prospects of their own immortal souls. They know—yes, alas! we all know; for we have had the sad experience. O, may God save us from the inward, deep, and secret cause of these dread calamities.

5. What cannot be done for the benefit of the world by a holy ministry? Such a ministry carries with it its own demonstration. There is argument—there is power in holiness. Of all the great positions of the gospel, this is the evidence of fact,—the highest, most indubitable evidence of which a moral question admits. Would the preacher show the strength of human depravity?

the marked distinction between his condition and character, his hopes and fears, his spirit and temper, and those of an unregenerate man, places it in the strongest possible light. Would he inspire his hearers with hatred to sin? he is himself an example of the deepest inward abhorrence of it; for he has abandoned it; he loathes it; he turns away from it, and spends his life to rescue men from it. Would he convince them of the efficacy of the Redeemer's blood? he is before their eyes, a living demonstration that it can "cleanse from all sin." Would he persuade them of the safety, the happiness, the triumph, of "this way?" he has given them the result of experience, in a mode so clear that they are compelled to confess it; for he has ventured his all upon it, and his soul rejoices "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." He carries with him a spirit which no man can either "gainsay or resist." Infidels quail before it. The sceptic pauses in his career of doubting the truth of Christianity, as he sees before him a Christian. The multitude tremble, with awe of some mysterious presence, when he prays. The disconsolate lifts his eyes in hope, saying, Surely there must be a way out of darkness. The young Christian is certain that there is a deeper work of grace for him. The faithful heart breathes afresh its longings for purity; and faith, and hope, and love rise in strength and power, as the seeker for holiness sees the living evidence of the truth of the doctrine, and the attainableness of the blessing. The whole church feels the moving, elevating power of such a ministry. A stationary position becomes impossible. The worldly, the trifling, the vain, who yield not to its reproofs, who cannot endure the

severity of its scrutiny, and the moving pathos of its appeals, flee before it, and seek refuge in the world as it is, or in a church more accommodating to their sins. Social meetings increase in numbers and spirituality. Confessions are deep and sincere. Prayers are fervent and powerful. God reveals himself in the sternness of his law—in the fulness of his love. The preaching, which multitudes flock to hear, burns like fire in the hearts of guilty sinners. Tears of penitence flow. The sigh, the groan, the prayer, reveal the fact that "the arrows of the Almighty are within them." The altar is thronged with mourners, and the shouts of triumph, mingling with the cries of distress, show how great is the power which is available to men. Onward, and still onward, the host of God advances, under the guidance of a man—a meek, humble, faithful, holy man, who dares to say, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Let no one say this is imagination. We have all seen and felt it.

My friend ——, had been but a short time from college. He was a preacher,—a scholar,—a gentleman. He had been sent to a station in the midst of a wealthy community, where there were but few members of the church, and where moralists, infidels and speculators combined to support him. He preached constantly, learnedly, and, we presume, faithfully. Months passed, and no indications of good appeared. We met him at a camp-meeting. Holiness was the great theme of the meeting. We loved the young man, and sought an opportunity to converse with him. He felt that all was not right. He believed himself a Christian, and lived with fixed purpose to obey and serve God. But there was a want of power in his preaching. He could say good things, but

they did not cut. He seemed to himself to be preaching into the air. He felt often the conviction, that he needed a deeper work of grace. He prayed, and wept, and tried, but, as it seemed, in vain, to rise; and still, he had no such power with God as he felt belonged to his sacred profession. We were in a prayer-meeting together, when he uttered with earnestness, but not with much emotion, the prayer, "O, Lord, sanctify my soul." We ventured to whisper in his ear such words of encouragement and advice as we thought his condition required. It was long before he melted down before the Lord; but when the struggle came on, it was a fearful one. His agony was terrible. He spoke of his unfaithfulness. He cried out against himself. He shrank with alarm from his inward impurities. With tears rolling from his eyes, and sweat gushing from every pore, he deprecated—covenanted—pleaded—agonized! It was the very wrestling of Jacob. He knew no defeat,—but the conflict was protracted. We left him, to meet other demands on our little remaining strength. How long he lay, a bleeding offering upon the altar of God, before the evidence of full salvation came, we know not. But he had been carried strengthless to his tent. We found him prostrate upon his couch, with his eyes closed, and his hands clasped, and with the brightness of an angel beaming from every feature. He wept, and shouted, and praised, with a voice so sweet, so changed, so humble and tender, that we would not have known him. The tears and sighs of the multitude within the tent, and the awe and terror upon the countenances of the wicked crowd about the door, told of an unearthly spirit, in the spectacle before

them, and in the words which were uttered. We pronounced his name, to get his attention. He gently opened his eyes, and then raising himself, threw his arms about our neck, and in broken sentences, intermingled with sobs and praise, he told us the story of his deliverance. Oh, the triumph—the power—the glory of that hour! We shall never forget it. His evidence of entire sanctification was clear as the light. He was soon too much absorbed in the ravishing glories of full redemption, and in the contemplation of his manifested Savior, to give special attention to his dearest friends; and there he lay, drinking in the streams of life, holding converse with the Divine Anointed; and it was no illusion; his face shone with the light of another world. All eyes beheld it, and, like Israel before Moses, when he descended from the mount of God, we stood awestruck, before the reflected glories of divinity.

The meeting closed, and "another spirit" was in our friend. He was humble, simple-hearted, and sweet as a child. But the power of Jehovah was in his preaching and his prayer. His hearers were amazed at the change in the preacher. The spirit of holiness burned and flamed out in every sermon. The word, like a two-edged, burnished Jerusalem blade, cut its way to the hearts of the people. Brave men wept like children. Strong men bowed themselves under a might which they could not see. Infidels trembled and stood aghast, before the divinity which spoke in the words and appeared in the movements of a man! The work was powerful, beyond all precedent in that vicinity. It swept like fire through that hitherto hardened and unbelieving community, bringing down infidel teachers,

moralists and scoffers indiscriminately, before the altar of God. Whole families were converted, the church was firmly established. They "who were not a people," had become the strong and conquering army of the Lord; and all—let no one dare to doubt it,—by the baptism of fire, which, in answer to faith and prayer, had fallen upon the servant of God.

Nor is it a doubtful relation between this cause and effect. As the word of God is true, as religion is divine, it ought to be so—it can be no otherwise. We languish and toil with no marked results, because we take not the energies of the great scheme of salvation, to give efficiency to our labors. We gradually lose our hold upon the omnipotence of God,—depend upon our own strength and skill; and then wonder that we see not the results which belong only to divine power. We work with what little grace we have, and flatter ourselves that we are doing all we can; search every where out of ourselves for the cause of our failures, and look upon the success we have as ample excuse for not doing more,—the more which we might, and surely would do, if we were entirely dedicated to God. A holy ministry! Oh, when shall the world look upon the spectacle? When shall God and man witness the self-sacrifice—the ardor—the living power of a holy ministry? The Lord, for Christ's sake, hasten the time.

But these are not our appeals. They rise directly out of the fact, that holiness is the central idea of Christianity. This fact sustained by various indubitable evidences founded upon the word of God is before us. With what views and feelings is it contemplated? What disposition is to be made of it? Let the reader answer

on his knees. Before the Searcher of hearts, let him renounce the world, and all carnal indulgence for ever. Let him seek to secure permanent reformation by the purification of the heart, through the blood of Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and having proved, by a living, triumphant faith, the blessedness of perfect love, let him obey till he dies, the great command, "but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and, in a heaven of unsullied holiness, he will prove the fulness of the Savior's beatitude. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Finally, we express the firm belief that this grand central sun will shine out with a light which shall be clear, steady, increasing and ineffably glorious, and at length fix upon itself the gaze of the world. It is destined to become the one attracting force which will produce and explain the unity, power and splendor of the universal church, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

THE

CENTRAL IDEA OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY JESSE T. PECK, D. D.

BOSTON: HENRY V. DEGEN, 21 CORNHILL.

NEW YORK: CARLTON & PORTER, 200 MULBERRY ST.

THIS work was issued in May last, and we are now selling the fourth thousand. The publishers, highly gratified with its reception, have aimed to bring it out in the very best style. They give the following extracts from the numerous favorable notices which they have received :

REV. Dr. MCCLINTOCK, in the Methodist Quarterly Review, July, 1856, says :

"The arrangement of the book is clear and logical; its style is at once fervent and forcible throughout."

REV ABEL STEVENS, in the Christian Advocate and Journal, says :

"We may well associate with Mr. Arthur's volume, [Tongue of Fire,] the new work of Dr. J. T. Peck."

He gives the subjects of the chapters, and adds :

"After this analysis, we need only further say that the subject is discussed with remarkable perspicuity; its theology we deem genuinely Methodistic, and its style is characterized by a peculiar fervor, and almost electrical stimulus, marred by little or no extravagance. After the late confusions of opinion which have prevailed among us on this great doctrine, a work so lucid, logical and orthodox, is needed."

The late REV. J. V. WATSON, in the North West Christian Advocate, says :

"The Doctor writes with great earnestness and spirit; his heart, especially on this subject, flowing in his lines. The work will do great good. The book is having a ready sale, and deserves it."

REV. F. G. HIBBARD, D. D., in the Northern Christian Advocate, says :

"The work before us is a terse, pointed, correct and comprehensive presentation of the reality, import, obligations, necessity, manner of seeking, and manner of keeping and treating the precious boon of entire inward holiness. The arguments of the author are entirely conclusive, evangelical, and in point, to settle faith, and satisfy inquiry. His style is nervous, searching and simple. His advices to the humble seeker are exceedingly in point. They are the language of the heart, and they reach the heart. We simply add, that theologically, the work, without being in the slightest degree controversial, is fully adjusted to the present state of opinion and discipline on the subject of holiness, and will be held as a standard work in Arminian divinity."

REV. D. W. CLARK, D. D., in the Ladies' Repository, after an analysis, says :

"The whole now exhibits a continuous train of thought, and embodies a really powerful argument upon the great subject of which it treats. The work is characterized by the author's usual vigor of style, and earnestness of appeal, and is just such a work as will do the earnest Christian good."

REV. R. S. FOSTER, D. D., in the National Magazine, says :

"The enterprising publisher has performed his part excellently, presenting the work in a most inviting dress. The author is well known, and whatever defects a censorious criticism might detect in his work, we are persuaded, on the whole, that it will not only add to his literary reputation, but that it is destined to do great and enduring good. The subject treated is Christian holiness. The author, while strictly Wesleyan, has happily succeeded in divesting his book of a controversial spirit. In a plain, straightforward method, he pursues his subject, suffusing every page with a genial and ardent piety, which cannot fail to commend him even to those who may, on many points of theory, differ from him."

REV. DR. FLOY, Editor of the National Magazine, says :

"The book is well calculated to promote the best interests of the church at large, and worthy of a place in every Christian library."

REV. M. FRENCH, in the Beauty of Holiness, says :

"Those who are acquainted with our author's writing will scarcely need the assurance that, in treating this great subject, he is bold, clear, full and safe. This author is evidently not one of a party, but of the church universal, yet consecrated to declare the whole counsel of God."

Rev. Dr. Baird, Editor of the Pittsburg Christian Advocate, says :

"The title of this book is honest. It does not hold out a lure to attract us to a reading, and then abandon us to a hopeless search through its pages to recover the idea suggested in the title. Here the reader finds the germ of the book in its name. Like all earnest men, the author dashes at once into the subject he proposes to discuss, and arrests the reader's attention by the question, "What is the central idea of Christianity?" The answer is direct and comprehensive, "*Holiness*, or *moral purity*." This answer is supported by several independent arguments—scriptural, analytical, historical, and experimental; and when the reader has given these the attention necessary to their full force, he feels that he has reached a rock, on which he can safely stand—the answer is among the things ascertained. The publication of this book will meet a want of the times. Following, as it does, in the wake of Arthur's 'Tongue of Fire,' breathing the same earnest spirit, and instinct with the same burning zeal, we hope it may be allowed to accompany that work through the land."

Dr. Baird, in a letter, says :

"The author has brought the church under immense obligation by this work."

Rev. Dr. Bangs says :

"I have read this book with the deepest interest. With the exception of Wesley's Plain Account and Fletcher's Treatise, this is the best, the clearest, the most pungent, and, of course, comes home to the understanding and conscience with the most quickening influence of any I have ever read. Reader, get the book, and read it for yourself, and then tell me if I have spoken in too commendatory terms of its contents."

James Strong, LL. D., author of the Harmony, says :

"I desire to recommend to the readers of the Advocate the new work of Dr. J. T. Peek, on Entire Holiness, "The Central Idea of Christianity." It is both philosophical in its treatment, and practical in its application of its theme; and appears to me peculiarly apposite to these times, when this doctrine has become the subject or occasion of so much controversy. Its temperate tone and discriminations, yet earnest and explicit manner, are eminently calculated to promote the great end, not only of "spreading scriptural holiness over these lands," but of diffusing it throughout the individual hearts of Christians."

The Commercial Advertiser says :

"The reverend author of this work is eminent among the divines of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He writes to prove that 'holiness, or Christian perfection, is the central idea of Christianity.' His argument on this is learned and vigorous."

Rev. Wesley Kenny has an able review of the work in the Methodist Quarterly Review for June, 1856. After showing that holiness is the great necessity of the church for bringing in "Christ's millennial reign," he says :

"To promote so sublime a result, the work of Dr. Peek is, in our deliberate judgment, most directly adapted. Sufficiently free of all controversy to offend none who desire to know the way of the Lord more perfectly, it is, at the same time, just the book to meet the present exigencies of our Zion. We greatly mistake if this volume does not make itself felt in the very ends of the earth, by the new energy it will infuse into the church—clear in argument, generally precise in definition, felicitous in illustration, and pressing its great conclusions upon the heart and conscience with a most fervid utterance."

Rev. Allen Steele, who examined it critically before it was published, says :

"It is *original* and independent, earnest and vigorous, as fresh and racy as it is just and profound.'

Rev. Daniel Wise, while editor of Zion's Herald, pronounced it

"An excellent volume, eminently calculated to stimulate the church to seek a closer walk with God."

Rev. Dr. Durbin says:

"Allow me to commend to the notice and perusal of the thoughtful and the earnest portion of the Christian Church, the volume mentioned at the head of this article. It is on the subject of evangelical holiness, or Christian perfection, a theme which has provoked much cloudy and intemperate discussion; so much so, indeed, that the moderate and reflecting had begun to lose interest and confidence in the subject. Such was the state of my own mind until I read Dr. Peek's book, in which I find the subject discussed in a calm and clear manner, and subjected to the test of Scripture and experience, confirmed by the nature of the case. In this book the proper relations of holiness or Christian perfection, to the other parts of the Christian's faith and experience, are clearly pointed out; and thus the heart is not only strengthened in its piety, but is guarded against undue excess of thought and feeling in one particular direction; and the result is strength and symmetry in the individual experience. It is a book to be read, learned, and inwardly digested, and will much promote vigorous and healthful piety in the Church."

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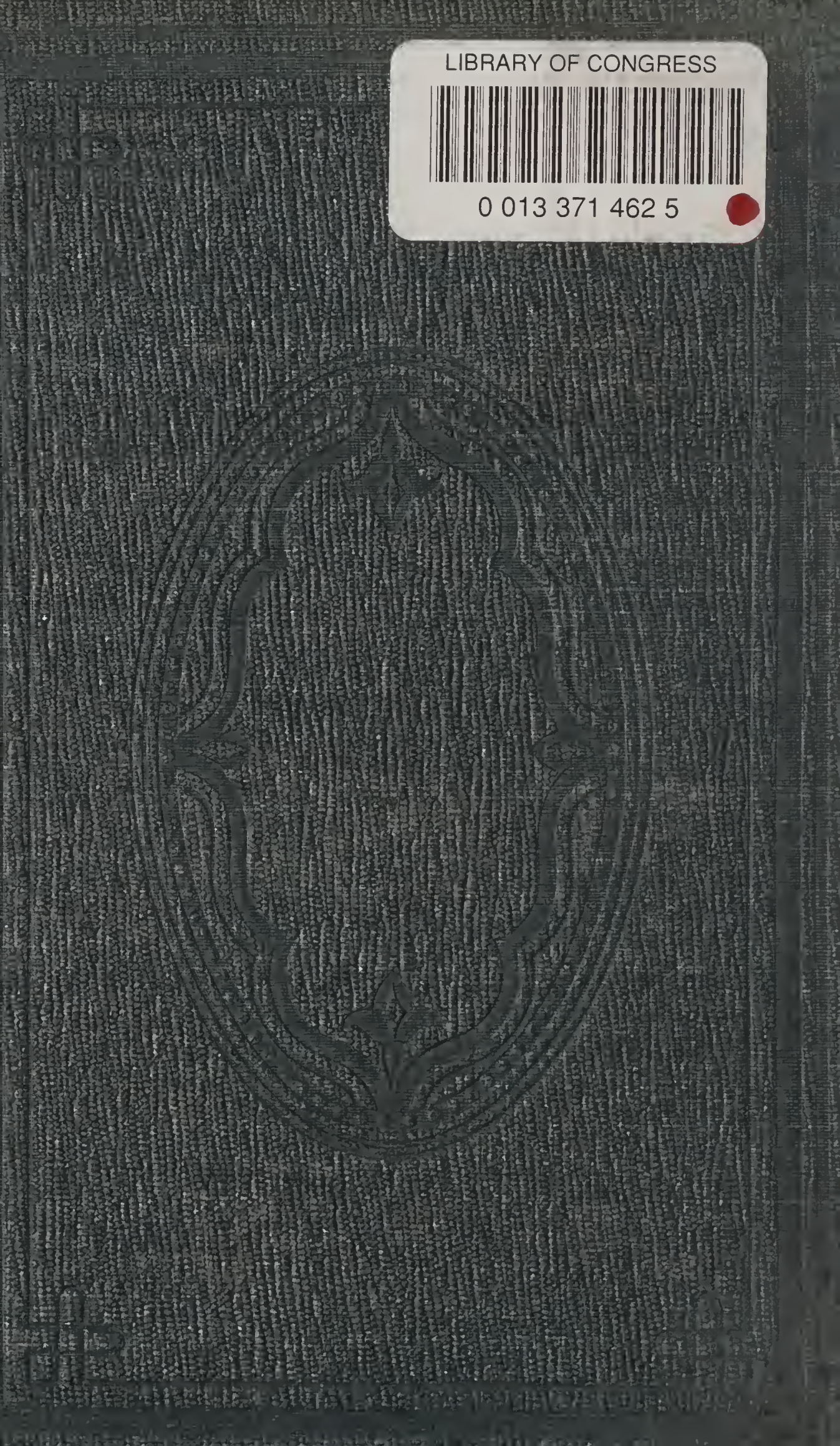
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